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TALUS

By GEOFFREY WAGNER

Spenser's Talus has not been given his due. He has seldom been promoted beyond that man of brass made by Hephaestus for Minos of Crete to protect his island. The great critics in the field—Padelford, Greenlaw, and Bhattackerje—have generally interpreted Talus as a blind instrument of a certain kind of justice, and—as such—a caricature of Grey's harsh regime in Ireland. Remembering Book V of the *Nichomachean Ethics* and Spenser's allusion to the twelve virtues of Aristotle in his prefatory letter to Raleigh, readers have usually accepted this view without questioning. It is illuminating, however, to study the relationship between Book V of *The Faerie Queene*, especially of Cantos i-iv (inclusive), and the facts of Spenser's own political experience that he was allegorizing. A comparison will show how a reactionary politician accepts the limitations of an aesthetic to which, after all, he has dedicated his life. Thus Talus, if closely examined, is more than he appears at first sight, and a reading of the episodes in which he is involved may suggest an ambivalence in Spenser's genius, one that possibly affects a reading of much of his work.

Everyone is familiar with the tone of Spenser's *Veue of the Present State of Ireland*, and the *Brief Note of Ireland*, being the official report on the Tyrone rebellion. The latter is not dissimilar to Payne's *Brief Description of Ireland* of 1589 or to

the common histories of the period.[1] It is generally agreed that, as partisan of Elizabeth, Spenser supported a merciless attitude to Ireland. It has been argued that "the cruelty which he advised was . . . a cruelty that was the truest kindness if one be disposed to grant the necessity of the subjugation";[2] he has been considered here also as really a far-sighted statesman, a "seer," who realised that a strong policy was necessary towards Ireland for its own good.[3] Further, he has been defended on the score that Ireland was, after all, the bridgehead of Spanish imperialism of the time.[4] Nevertheless, the general impression which remains is one of aristocratic ruthlessness.[5] For instance, to the Irish assemblies (the only platform for the common people of that time) "doe commonly retort all the scumme of the people, where they may meete and confer of what they list, which else they could not do without suspicion or knowledge of others."[6] Irenaeus speaks of the people as "blindly and brutishly informed,"[7] whilst the Irish footsoldiers "steal, they are cruell, and bloodie, full of revenge and delighting in deadly execution; licentious swearing, and blasphemers, common ravishers of women, and murtherers of children."[8] Nevertheless, Spenser's inhumanity here should be defended from the too literal interpretation of it along Sinn Feinist lines, as in Irish criticism from the *Dublin Review* of 1834 to Miss Henley in 1928.[9] For it is not simply champion-

[1] The Irish chroniclers of greatest value here are *Annals of the Four Masters* (ed. J. O'Donovan, 7 vols., 1856), and the *Annals of Loch Cé* (ed. W. Hennessy, Rolls Series, 2 vols., 1871), available in Marsh's Library, Dublin. The standard modern history of Ireland in the Tudor Period is perhaps that by R. Bagwell (*Ireland under the Tudors*, 3 vols., 1890), or M. Bonn's excellent, though unfortunately still untranslated, *Die Englische Kolonisation in Ireland* (3 vols., Stuttgart, 1906).

[2] Edwin Greenlaw, "Spenser and British Imperialism," *Modern Philology* IX (1912), p. 347.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] H. S. V. Jones, "Spenser's Defense of Lord Grey," *University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature* V (August 1919), p. 13.

[5] *Cp.* here Milton, *Samson Agonistes*, ll. 674-77, and *Paradise Regained*, Bk. III, l. 49.

[6] "Veue of the Present State of Ireland," *Ancient Irish Histories* (Dublin, 1809), p. 389.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 397.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 383.

[9] Pauline Henley, *Spenser in Ireland* (Dublin, Cork University Press, 1928), p. 168 ff.

ship of that Lord Deputy who spiked the mutilated trunk of John of Desmond and hung it in chains on the North Gate of Cork until the wind blew it into the river below. Spenser's real desire was for an aesthetic, rather than a political, reaction, though he saw one in terms of the other ("the Irish, in the violence of theyr furyes, treade downe and trample under foote all both divine and human thinges, and the lawes themselves they doe especially rage upon, and rend in peeces, as most repugnant to theyr libertye and naturall freedome, which in theyr madness they affect.") [10] A comparison between the *Veue* and Aristotle's *Politics* has shown that both Spenser and Aristotle wanted weighty reasons before a change was made.[11] The sort of justice Spenser wanted for Ireland was really literary in kind, the harmony he hoped for that of a renaissance scholar, rather than that of a Lutheran politician. It was the aesthete's revulsion from the ugly lawlessness of the Ireland of Con O'Neill and Murrough O'Brien, of the illegitimate Matthew 'Kelly' and the fanatical bishop, James O'Hely. This is seen in all Spenser advocated for Ireland: the right of escheat was tyranny and the Brehon Law implicit anarchy; [12] the Papistical nature of Irish Catholicism spelt ecclesiastical chaos.[13] The discipline Spenser wanted for Ireland was therefore a type of learning "next after the knowledge and fear of God." [14] The violence with which he would impress this on the Irish, it can be argued, was but the violence of his time. Yet, despite all this, the general climate of the work is inhuman, and it is necessarily inhuman to one extent: that by the criteria of aesthetic principles, the Irish *had* turned away from authority and (Aristotelian) reason.[15] This duality, between

[10] *Veue*, p. 328.

[11] William Fenn DeMoss, *The Influence of Arisotle's "Politics" and "Ethics" on Spenser* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1918), *passim*.

[12] *Veue*, p. 332.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 396.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 483.

[15] There have been various critical defenses of Spenser's defense of Grey, the best known of which is perhaps H. S. V. Jones' *Spenser's Defense of Lord Grey* (University of Illinois, August, 1919). Here we find quoted Irenaeus' remark that Grey was "most gentell, affable, loving, and temperate; but that the necessitye of that present state of thinges enforced him to that violence" (p. 14). This may have been so but the emotional timbre of Grey is harsh: cp., "A Declaration by the Lord Deputy and Council" (*Irish State Papers*, 1596, No. 261), "The way to suppress the Northern rebels is to prosecute them with a sharp war, and

poet and politician, is all-important to a reading of the Talus episodes in *The Faerie Queene*, which represent the reverse process, a poet dipping into political experience for his matter. And, interestingly enough, the most compassionate references in the *Veue* are those quasi-poetical passages where Spenser stepped outside the bounds of political rhetorick into his own medium. Examples of this can be found in the tender passages describing that "most beautiful and sweet country" [16] with its "goodlye valleyes . . . fitt for fayre habitations," [17] lyrical moments where the quality of the style most nearly approaches the divine prose of Lyly or Robert Greene. When we come, for instance, across a reference like

> "out of every corner of the woodes and glennes they came creeping foorthe upon theyre handes, for theyre legges could not bear them . . . and yf they founde a platt of water-cresses or sham-rokes, there they flocked as to a feast for the time." [18]

we sense at once that we are in an aesthetic contxet, even if we are not instinctively reminded of Alma's enemies:

> "Vile caitive wretches, ragged, rude, deformd,
> All threatning death, all in straunge manner armd;
> Some with unweldy clubs, some with long speares,
> Some rusty knives, some staves in fier warmd:
> Sterne was their looke; like wild amazed steares,
> Staring with hollow eies, and stiff upstanding heares." [19]

The attitude (in which the sack of Kilcolman doubtless confirmed Spenser) is principally emotional and imaginative, and thus the paragraph from the *Veue* ends, significantly, on a note of compassion that is rare there: "Any stonye heart would have rued the same." [20] Finally, when we reach the intensely poetic atmosphere of Book V of *The Faerie Queene*, the unhappy plight of Irena has a different persuasion altogether from Spenser's treatment of Ireland in the *Veue*.

thereby extirpate those who are obstinate." Professor Greenlaw's defense is expressed in his article in *Modern Philology* (VII, p. 187 ff.) and suggests that Spenser was in favor of Grey's administration according to the principles of the Machiavellian politic. Actually Spenser seems to have seen Machiavelli very much through the screen of Bodin's *Six Livres de la République*.

[16] *Veue*, p. 28.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 210.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 139.
[19] *The Faerie Queene*, II. ix. 13.
[20] *Veue*, p. 139.

This, then, is a possible clue to the reading of Talus. Talus is administrative justice, the companion of Arthegall,[21] legislative justice.[22] He is an unreasoning police force and, in the famous passage where Arthegall has to restrain him,[23] for example, critics have interpreted him as a plea on behalf of Grey.

But, strangely enough, the force of Talus, although simply a medieval personification of an abstraction, a mere morality play puppet, works against Grey-Arthegall. And the effect of this is but a filling out of a character we had already tended to dislike before, a knight who had grudged losing,[24] and who had been quite spitefully merciless.[25] It seems likely, then, that Spenser's intention was to vindicate Grey by showing that it was the instrument of justice itself, Talus, which was harsh, rather than the administrator, but that here, as in the *Veue*, the result was different.

Professor Padelford has made a suggestive outline of the place of Talus in the execution of justice;[26] thus in Canto I we find Talus dealing with domestic problems, Sangliere being made to bear the head of the woman he has decapitated as penance: in Canto II he is a type of policeman dealing with public extortion (Pollente and the paynim Lady), and indeed could even "like a limehound winde her":[27] in Canto III defrauders like the false Florimell, Braggadocchio and Trompart, are dealt with: in Canto IV property rights (the argument between Bracidas and Amidas) are settled. But surely these are the embodiments of Aristotle's phases of distributive justice, corrective justice, retaliation and equity. And the chief challenge to this theory makes the point about this interpretation of Talus, namely, that Arthegall does not positively represent the high ideals of justice, he does not stand for those principles of right which are actually opposed to the storm-trooper violence of Talus.

[21] The new spelling "Artegall" in Book V has seemed to some critics to imply a new level of interpretation, cp. Josephine Waters Bennett, *The Evolution of "The Faerie Queene"* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1942), p. 179.

[22] *FQ*, V. i. 12.

[23] *FQ*, V. xii. 8.

[24] *FQ*, IV. v. 9.

[25] *FQ*, IV. vi. 17.

[26] The Variorum Edition of Book V; also Professor Padelford's article, "Talus—the Law" in *Modern Philology*.

[27] *FQ*, II. ii. 25

This is borne out in the Radigund episode where, after deserting his master because he " thought it iust t'obay " [28] the letter rather than the spirit of the law, Talus is finally pitilessness personified.[29] But nowhere in all this does Arthegall emerge as clemency in the positive. In the passage mentioned above, where he restrains his page,[30] and at the end of the book as he stays Talus from chastising Detraction, who with Ennuie stands for the anti-Grey rumor-mongers in Ireland,[31] he acts negatively, in terms of Talus, rather than positively, in terms of himself. Arthegall has little in common with Mercilla in Canto IX, and finally Spenser has to resort to telling the reader that Arthegall *is* clemency, when, in the temple of Isis, into which Talus is not allowed to enter,[32] the " righteous Knight " is awkwardly symbolized by the crocodile clemence.[33]

It might be objected that it was a special kind of justice, even of aesthetic justice, which Spenser is portraying here. There is not space to discuss this large subject. To Spenser, Justice meant temperance in the soul,[34] harmony and order in the state, both personal and political. All the situations Arthegall and Talus meet lend themselves, and add up, to this view. True to Aristotle's definition,[35] Sangliere represents the excess of committing injustice, the youth in Canto I the excess of suffering injustice. Right reason constitutes the essence of justice,[36] and the introduction of the Astraea legend at the beginning shows that justice is not to be regarded as a mechanical rule, but as a matter of moral judgment. Yet where does Arthegall implement this concept?

In no place is he the positive " doer " of justice. His form of justice is only seen in negative terms, in relation to Talus. We are therefore brought to the conclusion that Arthegall can do no more than speculate on justice, Talus no more than act it out. They are twin aspects, speculative and active, of a single soul, and they cannot perform pertinently without each other. Before justice can be done, both Arthegall and Talus

[28] *FQ*, V. v. 19 (l. 19).
[29] *FQ*, V. vii. 35.
[30] *FQ*, V. xii. 8.
[31] *FQ*, V. xii. 43.
[32] *FQ*, V. vii. 3 (l. 9).
[33] *FQ*, V. vii. 22.
[34] *FQ*, V. ix. 32 ff.
[35] " Just conduct is a mean between committing and suffering injustice."
[36] *FQ*, V. ix. 1 ff., cp here the Leveller Principles, as in *An Appeal from the Commons to the Free People* (1647), p. 2.

must be present,[37] and the one must seek counsel of the other, just as Minos had to be instructed by Jupiter, Numa by the fairy Egeria, and Pythagoras in the solitary cave at Samos.

The message seems to be, then, that unless a man embody within himself this mean, he cannot be truly just in his relations to the other individual virtues. Thus it can be seen that the result of this allegory is rather different from an apologia for Grey. What Spenser had set out to portray (according to critics like Upton),[38] as the public virtue of justice, as justice in society, emerges emotionally as private justice, justice in the individual soul, justice in a subjective, aesthetic, context, and by this standard Grey comes out for ever damned. C. S. Lewis has admitted this persuasion, calling Arthegall "one of the most disagreeable characters in the whole poem,"[39] but the point is whether this is in spite of, or because of, Spenser.

In conclusion, it is still generally thought that Spenser was trying to vindicate Lord Grey in Arthegall,[40] and that he did this in his allegory by showing that it was the method (Talus) not the man at fault, and that the man, indeed, in many ways, was at the mercy of the method. It is all the more significant, therefore, that critics who agree with this opinion, and who are familiar with Spenser's idea of political justice in the *Veue*, yet see Arthegall as disagreeable. This shows that the final conception in this ambivalent figure of justice was aesthetic. Spenser may have loved Grey in person, admired him as much as from the *Veue* and the dedicatory sonnets he seems to have, but he was first a poet, and in an aesthetic context, the Arthegall-Grey[41] figure *had* to appear disagreeable. For aesthetically Grey was repulsive. "*Nella tormenta Irlanda fu inviato Lord*

[37] DeMoss., *op. cit.*, p. 41.

[38] The edition of 1758.

[39] C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1936), p. 348.

[40] Cp. Bennett, *op. cit.*, p. 189. Frank Covington Jnr., "Spenser's Use of History in the 'Veue of the Present State of Ireland.'" *The University of Texas Bulletin* (*Studies in English # 4*, March 15, 1924), pp. 5-38. Edwin Greenlaw, "Studies in Spenser's Historical Allegory" (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1932), pp. 142-3. Pauline Henley, *op. cit.*, p. 137. Kate Warren, *Introduction* to her Edition of Book V., pp. ix-xv. Variorum Edition, etc.

[41] In the Burbon episode Arthegall does not, of course, represent Lord Grey. In the closing Cantos of this Book it is generally agreed that he stands for Sir John Norris.

Grey of Wilton, per stroncare ogni rebellione." [42] As a politician Spenser may have admired him—"*non fa che eliogare la maniera forte del suo capo*" [43]—but he could not play traitor to poetic values.

This dichotomy affects, of course, a reading of all Spenser's work and indeed is germane, to take one instance, to references to court life, strangely derogatory when it is realized they were written long before he was disappointed at court, when, in fact, he was still angling for position there.[44] It seems therefore that it is possible to see this allegory in a new light, for although Book V is an unhappy book, as Lewis remarks,[45] yet what emerges is a positive, happy quality. If the book is "uninspired," [46] if the versification is not, for once, Mantuanesque, one is the more easily persuaded that the aesthetic content has poured into the subject matter. Yet not all critics do agree, in fact, that Talus lacks poetic beauty. Coleridge's praise of Talus is well-known and De Vere and DeSelincourt also saw in this figure considerable imaginative vigor.

"The fifth book would have been severe even if it had been successful." [47] The conception of Talus *is*, if looked at in this sense, successful. It is the tragedy of the poet-politician and as such it is extremely modern. But the casual interpretation of many critics (such as C. S. Lewis, B. E. C. Davis, Janet Spens, W. L. Renwick and Emile Legouis) seems unjust. This allegory is proof of the true poet in Spenser. In his own life a champion of reaction (as much against the communism of More's *Utopia* as against the Munster Anabaptists), in his poetry he comes close to Langland in his figure of Munera. When circumscribed by poetry and poetic values, the politician becomes a liberal, possessed of that human responsibility no true artist can deny.

University of Rochester

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[42] Francesco Viglione, *La Poesia Lirica di Edmondo Spenser* (Genova, Emiliano Degli Orfini, 1937), p. 30.

[43] *Ibid.*

[44] Speaking of "pierlesse Poesye" Piers admitted that "Nor in Princes pallace thou doe sitt" (*The Shepheards Calendar*, October Eclogue, l. 80), a note that occurs often in the later Spenser (*FQ*, Bk. VI and the *Prothalamion*), as in Milton (*Comus*), but which is strange here.

[45] Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 349.

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 347.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 350.

THE ENDING OF *HAMLET* AS A FAREWELL TO ESSEX

By Edward S. Le Comte

A number of scholars, of whom the best known is Dover Wilson, have believed that the inspiration for the character of Hamlet "came to Shakespeare from the career and personality of the most conspicuous figure in England during the last decade of the sixteenth century, namely the brilliant, the moody, the excitable, the unstable, the procrastinating, the ill-fated Earl of Essex."[1] The identification is of course only partial, and it does not, I take it, seek glibly to pluck the heart of Hamlet's mystery. It simply furnishes, at most, a basis for that mystery (if there *is* a mystery) by suggesting that the dramatist, along with thousands of his contemporaries, was fascinated by a particular case of enigmatic human nature, more complex than anything to be found in treatises on melancholy,[2] and that in some degree, which it will be the business of Part One, the *pro* side, of this paper more particularly to define, *Hamlet* is a memorial to Essex.

[1] Dover Wilson's edition of *Hamlet* (Cambridge, 1936), Introduction, p. lxvi. The main assembler of points in favor of the Essex theory has been Lilian Winstanley in "*Hamlet*" *and the Scottish Succession* (Cambridge, 1921) and "*Hamlet* and the Essex Conspiracy," *Aberystwyth Studies*, VI, VII (1924-25). The earlier study contains interesting points connecting Essex with Hamlet not repeated in the later study, but it unfortunately pursues at the same time, and with much greater enthusiasm, a very different and as it seems to me incompatible theory, linking *Hamlet* to the Darnley murder of 1567 (very ancient history, that!), the marriage of Mary Queen of Scots to Bothwell the murderer, with James as the infant avenger. I do not see how Hamlet can be identified with both James *and* Essex (and a piece of Southampton), Claudius with Bothwell *and* Leicester, Polonius with Rizzio *and* Burleigh, etc. Such ingenuity recoils back upon itself, leaving the average reader in no mood to consider either theory; whereas one of them is well worth exploring. These two publications largely summarize, or expand, or offer further background to, points in the brilliant pioneering article by James T. Foard, "The Genesis of Hamlet," *Manchester Quarterly*, VIII (1889), 1-31, 122-152, 220-247, who by virtue of this article and other publications going back to 1862 seems to have been the founder of the Essex theory.

Quotations and line-numberings in the following article are based on the Oxford text.

[2] For a warning on this "clinical" approach to Hamlet see Louise C. Turner Forest, "A Caveat for Critics against Invoking Elizabethan Psychology," *PMLA*, LXI (September, 1946), 651-672.

However, as this is to enter the realm of conjecture, honest and balanced consideration demands a statement of cons as well. Rather than risk the confusion of a paper that would be at war with itself on every page, I have kept the two sides separate. Part One will present a brief review of some old points and make some new ones in behalf of the Hamlet-Essex theory, especially as it can be related to the ending of the play, where it has hardly been applied and yet where it most neatly works. In Part Two I have concentrated the principal objections and alternatives that occur to me.

Part One

One *starts*, at any rate, with facts. First, even those who treat of Shakespeare as if he had lived in a vacuum, have to admit that once, in the chorus to Act V of *Henry V*, the dramatist went very far out of his way to make a direct and extended reference to Essex, wishing "the general of our gracious empress" a speedy and successful return from Ireland and alluding to his popularity:

> How many would the peaceful city quit
> To welcome him!

This was in 1599: Essex's tragedy and Hamlet's were soon to be enacted. Equally undeniable is the link between Shakespeare and Essex provided by Southampton, who, because of his part in the same rebellion for which Essex was beheaded, was in the Tower when *Hamlet* was written,[3] and remained there until James freed him. Thirdly, there is overwhelming evidence that plays *were* taken topically, as by the Queen herself, when she said, "I am 'Richard the Second,' know ye not that?"[4] The Essex conspirators would have had her so,

[3] I agree with H. D. Gray ("The Date of *Hamlet*," *J.E.G.P.*, XXXI, 1932, 51-61) that "all the indications that we have seem to point to the summer or autumn of 1601 for the composition and first production of *Hamlet*," and I am here adding to those indications. This year for *Hamlet* is one matter on which Dover Wilson and Sir E. K. Chambers agree (see the latter's *Shakespearean Gleanings*, Oxford, 1944). As for Gabriel Harvey's marginal note, Gray argues that it refers to the *third* Earl of Essex, not the second, while Kittredge—in, for instance, his edition of the *Complete Works* (Boston, 1936, p. 1145)—found its present tense "indecisive." Chambers (*op. cit.*, p. 68) wonders if 'commendes' is not "a scribal error for 'commended.'"

[4] Joseph Quincy Adams, *A Life of William Shakespeare* (Boston, 1923), p. 319.

apparently, since they paid forty shillings to have Shakespeare's play performed on the eve of the rebellion.[5] As it turned out they might more appropriately have attended a performance of *Hamlet*, had that play as we have it been in existence, with its unsuccessful rebellion and its hero who cannot make up his mind. For on Sunday, February 8, 1601, hundreds of Londoners personally witnessed the indecisions of Robert Devereux, who, given a native hue of resolution, might well on that day have become King of England.[6]

To come to the play itself, it has been pointed out a number of times in what an uncanny way the family situation of Robert Devereux fits Shakespeare's changes—for are we not to call such a change as the poisoning his, since we do not know it to have been made by anyone else?—in the old Amleth story. At least according to purveyors of scandal, the Earl of Leicester seduced Robert's mother, poisoned his father (by "an Italian *Recipe*" which induced "an extreame Flux"),[7] and then

The deposition scene in *Richard II* was significantly omitted from the first three quartos (1597, and 1598—two), and, just as significantly, its inclusion in the fourth quarto of 1608 was featured on the title-page.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 317-318.

[6] He ought to have invaded Whitehall instead of the City, for the queen was not guarded. To quote the leading modern authority, G. B. Harrison, *The Life and Death of Robert Devereux Earl of Essex* (New York, 1937), Essex's last fight ended "in miserable failure. Had it been well planned and resolutely followed the rising might have succeeded. If he had attacked the Court at dawn his force would have been greatly superior to any that could be mustered at a moment's notice, and even if he had not immediately broken in, he would have cut off the Palace from the City" (p. 293).

[7] The scandal was aired in a publication of 1584 which caused a furore by its scurrilities, *The Copie of a Letter Wryten by a Master of Arte of Cambridge to his Friend in London*, etc. (S. T. C. 19399), usually referred to as *Leicester's Commonwealth* (which title it bore when republished in London in 1641). It is possibly worth mentioning that a manuscript copy of this pamphlet as well as of that allegorical device of Bacon's which I cite below, along with other material relating to Essex, formed part of the mysterious Northumberland manuscript which some have, very dubiously, sought to connect with Shakespeare (see E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare*, Oxford, 1930, I, 506, and II, Appendix B, no. xvi). Clara Longworth de Chambrun is one of those who contend that the dramatist once possessed and scribbled on this manuscript (*Shakespeare Rediscovered*, New York, 1938, pp. 267 ff.), and she even finds a verbal parallel between *Leicester's Commonwealth* and *Hamlet* (unimpressive, involving the word "quietus," III, i, 75), all the while being apparently unaware of the claims that may be advanced for *Leicester's Commonwealth* as one of the sources of *Hamlet*. I quote from the only modern reprint of the pamphlet, that in Frank J. Burgoyne, editor, *Collotype Facsimile & Type Transcript of an Elizabethan Manuscript preserved at Alnwick Castle, Northumberland* (London, 1904), p. 90.

married—this is fact—the widow. We thus have a situation as near to that of *Hamlet* as "The Murder of Gonzago," for if the reputed history involves an Earl rather than a King (it is hardly fair at this point, and at this point only, to cite the 1603 Quarto, where the King and Queen are Duke and Duchess), and is without the blood-relationship (which derives from the saga) between murdered and murderer, the play within a play lacks the adultery theme and does not give us fratricide either.

There were those in the audience who would recall this notorious scandal,—as does Camden [8] in his *Annals*—if they had occasion to, but of course it was ancient history. The association of Hamlet with Essex would have come rather from current history and from correspondences between the two characters. The correspondences are probably sufficiently summed up in the words from Dover Wilson with which this article began, except that there is another adjective to add: "woman-hating." [9] The Earl cursed the very femininity of the Queen herself. "The Court is a prey to two evils—delay and inconstancy; and the cause is the sex of the sovereign." [10] Nothing that Hamlet says to Ophelia or his mother is so savage as Essex's outburst when, during his final estrangement from the Queen, someone ventured to speak in his presence of "Her Majesty's conditions." "Her conditions! Her conditions are as crooked as her carcase!" [11] The fact remains that, whether we are thinking of Amleth or of Essex, Shakespeare has trans-

[8] *Annals, or, the Historie of the Most Renowned and Victorious Princess Elizabeth, Late Queen of England,* 3rd edition (London, 1635), pp. 190-191. (The original Latin edition was published in 1615.)

[9] See the more extensive summary in Wilson's *The Essential Shakespeare* (Cambridge, 1932), pp. 92-107. But a word from Sir John Harington should be added on how mad Essex seemed in the last months of his life: "he shifteth from sorrow and repentance to rage and rebellion so suddenly, as well proveth him devoid of good reason as of right mind. In my last discourse he uttered strange words, bordering on such strange designs, that made me hasten forth and leave his presence." *Nugae Antiquae,* quoted by Walter Bourchier Devereux, *Lives and Letters of the Devereux, Earls of Essex* (London, 1853), II, 130.

[10] Lytton Strachey, *Elizabeth and Essex* (New York, 1928), p. 162. It might be Hamlet speaking when Essex writes the Queen, "when I remember that your Majesty hath, by the intolerable wrong you have done both me and yourself, not only broken all laws of affection, but done against the honour of your sex, I think all places better than that where I am. . . ." *Ibid.,* pp. 176-177.

[11] *Ibid.,* p. 237.

muted a crude original hero as well as a crude original plot. Hamlet is nobler in every way than the historical Essex, and we today are left to wonder how his contemporaries could so have overrated and taken to their hearts this spoiled child of fortune, whose vanity and ineptitude abundantly come through in the accounts, but not his charm. Yet there can be no denying his sway over the idealizing poets, and he may well have been the original of Spenser's Sir Calidore, "Courtesie,"[12] though Chapman was nearer to his character in equating him with Achilles.

But leaving the question of character, there is something to be said regarding the personal appearance of Hamlet and Essex. It has been asserted that the Earl affected black in his liveries—this on the basis of a poem of 1590:

> Young Essex, that thrice-honourable earl;
> Y-clad in mighty arms of mourner's dye,
> And plume as black as is the raven's wing.
> . . . . . .
> His staves were such, or of such hue at least,
> As are those banner-staves that mourners bear;
> And all his company in funeral black.[13]

It would seem, however, that this is going too far back in the Earl's life, for the evidence of a poem of 1595 (not quoted by those who quote the above, though it comes from the same poet, Peele) cuts the other way;[14] besides, both are descriptions of special ceremonious occasions. But, and this is my point, Essex in his last days—the Essex whom, by a theory I am going to introduce, Shakespeare was particularly thinking of—did, like the doomed man he was, wear black. During his

[12] See Ray Heffner, "Essex, the Ideal Courtier," *ELH*, I (April, 1934), 7-36.

[13] "Polyhymnia" by George Peele (*Works*, ed. A. H. Bullen, London, 1888, II, 292). Cited by Foard, *op. cit.*, p. 125, and by Winstanley.

[14] "The first that led, in cheerful colours clad,
In innocent white and fair carnation,
Was he whose wisdom in his younger years
And love to arms make him so far renown'd,
The noble earl of Essex and of Ewe."
"Anglorum Feriae" in *Works*, II, 349-350. This was on the occasion described below, p. 105.

trial [15] as well as on the day of his well witnessed [16] execution [17] he was dressed all in black.[18]

We must put ourselves in the place of the audiences in those troubled days of 1601 and 1602, when shadows had fallen on the glory of Gloriana. In the second scene of *Hamlet* they see an actor accoutered like Essex, and they begin to find out that this is a play which deals with the question of succession to the Crown—that question which was vexing all England, and Scotland as well, and to which the aged, ailing Queen would give no answer. Did not "Denmark" become England readily enough, and the Danish court the English, which had its full share of factions and spyings and conspiracies? [19] What were

[15] Harrison, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

[16] There were "divers knights and gentlemen to the number of about an hundred" within the Tower yard. Thomas Birch, *Memoirs of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth* (London, 1754), II, 482.

[17] Harrison, p. 322. To be very accurate, he was dressed in black up *to* the last moment. A contemporary pamphlet (which can be checked with half a dozen other accounts in prose or verse) quoted in *Shakespeare's England* (Oxford, 1916), II, 102, describes his "gowne of wrought velvet a blacke sattin sute a felt hatte blacke and a little ruffe about his necke. After his speech to the spectators he put off his gowne and on finishing his prayers opening and putting off his dublet he was in a scarlet wastecote, and then ready to lay downe."

[18] It is just possible that there was another point of outward resemblance:

> "Who . . .
> Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face?"
>
> (II, ii, 607-608.)

With Kittredge (ed. *Hamlet*, Boston, 1939, p. 204) I see no reason for regarding this as a purely imaginary beard, although most modern actors appear without it. The insoluble question is, how full and therefore how unusual a beard is meant? If—I make the conjecture just in passing and nothing of moment depends upon it—if this is all that survives of Shakespeare's instructions to the original Hamlet to wear a full beard, we have another striking correspondence before Hamlet has said a word. What a later century would call a goatee was common, but a full beard was rare in Elizabethan times, as now. However, the Earl of Essex took to wearing a full beard after the Cadiz expedition: it got a certain fame as "the Cadiz beard," and set a fashion (which would make it safer for an actor to wear it in 1601, meaning and yet not meaning Essex). An engraving of Essex in 1600 (reproduced in Harrison, op. p. 240; a copy in *The Fugger News-Letters, Second Series*, ed. Victor von Klarwill, London, 1926, op. p. 228, is engraved 1601) that was hawked on the streets until the sale was forbidden, shows this beard very amply. What emboldens me to make (in the seclusion of a footnote) this conjecture is that Shakespeare apparently *did* refer to Essex's beard in *Henry V* ("a beard of the general's cut," III, vi, 83). For details, including Guilpin's satirical references to the "Cadz-beard," see "Shakspere, Guilpin, and Essex," *Shakespeare Association Bulletin*, January, 1948, pp. 17-19.

[19] It is not at all strange that Essex, the chief male figure at Court, should have developed a persecution complex. As early as 1596 he wrote, "I live in a place,

they thinking, these original audiences, by the fourth act, when they found, too, that this was a play with a rebellion in it, just such a rebellion as had taken place on the streets of London a few months before and wrought the downfall of a popular candidate for the throne? Of course the rebellion is not assigned in the play to Hamlet; that would be going too far, and Shakespeare had other purposes. However, as John E. Hankins [20] has lately observed, the cry of the populace. "Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!" is not very appropriate, since "In the play there has been nothing to show that Laertes aspired to the throne. We learn from his advice to Ophelia that his family is not of royal blood, and we are told that Hamlet, the lineal heir, is very popular with the public (IV, vii. 18)." Yet, on further consideration, we are all the nearer to the late event here, for Essex had scarcely a claim to royal blood either.[21] Moreover he, like Laertes, was talked and negotiated out of carrying through his original intention to seize the throne when he might have done so, Queen Elizabeth, like Claudius, not being adequately guarded on that fatal day.

The Essex theory is, in short, a potent instrument of interpretation, and the problem is to use it restrainedly. We must not see Essex everywhere, but only in certain places, and as for the other *dramatis personae*, the more of them we attempt to identify, the more ingenious and improbable we become.[22] I

where I am hourly conspired against, and practised upon." Harrison, p. 137. His own conspiracy he regarded as a counter-conspiracy.

[20] *The Character of Hamlet and other Essays* (Chapel Hill, 1941), p. 113.

[21] Essex traced his descent from Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, "which remote alliance with the blood royal constituted his sole claim to the crown." Wilson, ed. *Richard II* (Cambridge, 1939), p. xxxi; for details see Evelyn M. Albright, "Shakespeare's *Richard II* and the Essex Conspiracy," *PMLA*, XLII (1927), 695.

[22] The common identification of Polonius with Lord Burleigh does accord with the theory, for Essex scorned that doddering and devious and moralistic chief councillor. (For a connection between the name "Polonius" and Burleigh, see I. Gollancz, *A Book of Homage to Shakespeare*, Oxford, 1916, pp. 173-177.)

May Ophelia—she who sings the refrain "For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy" (IV, v, 186)—insofar as she seems betrayed, stand for Essex's neglected wife? Let me give some "documentation" (in which, however, I do not much believe). Lady Essex, she "of ladies most deject and wretched,/ That suck'd the honey of his music vows" (III, i, 164-165), must have seemed a pathetic figure even in the days before her husband's eclipse; and during it we have the observation of Rowland White under date of November 4, 1599: "My Lady of Essex is a most sorrowful creature for her husband's captivity; she wears all black of the meanest price, and receives

should deny, because it seems to me that the context does not in the least encourage, what many see as the one reference to Essex and his rebellion, "the late innovation" of II, ii, 356.[23] But looking elsewhere, the minimum suggestion would be that there are more allusions to Essex in the play than modern readers have suspected.

William Camden, in his *Annals, or, the Historie of . . . Elizabeth*,[24] tells a romantic story apropos of the visit of the Duke of Biron to the Queen in September, [25] 1601.

> Whereas certaine *French* writers have delivered, that amongst other things of those which were condemned, she shewed the Earle of *Essex* his skull in her private Chappell, or (as others write) fastened upon a pole, to *Biron* and the *Frenchmen*, it is a ridiculous vanity, for it was buried together with his body.[26]

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no comfort in any thing," and in this suppliant's mourning she haunted the court (Devereux, II, 88). She referred to herself as "an afflicted and woful lady" in her appeal to Cecil (*Ibid.*, p. 174). To come back to Ophelia's fragment of a ballad about "bonny sweet Robin," we have the tune but not the words: it may have concerned Robin Hood, but this is not certain, "Robin" being the diminutive of (and the Queen's name for) "Robert." A letter to Essex from his mother commences, "Sweet Robin": Devereux, I, 494. J. Payne Collier printed a poem (let us hope it is genuine!) called "The Robin" which covertly deals with Essex (*Ancient Biographical Poems*, Camden Society, 1855, pp. 21-23), of which lines 5 to 8 may be taken as a pertinent sample:

> "This Robyn is a pretye one,
> Well formed at point devise,
> A mynnion birde to loke uppon,
> And suer of worthye pryse."

Essex in one of his own poems alluded to himself as "robin" punningly (*Poetry of the English Renaissance*, ed. J. W. Hebel and H. H. Hudson, New York, 1929, p. 132). And to top all this, the Countess of Essex was actually accused of making a ballad about her husband after his death. Richard Bancroft, Bishop of London, complained on February 27, 1600-01, "a fellow goeth about the street, selling the ballads whereof here is a copy enclosed. He giveth it out that the Countess of Essex hath made it, which procureth many to buy it." Historical MSS. Commission, Part XI, 88, *Cecil Manuscripts*. This, one of Winstanley's three identifications for Ophelia—she offers it just *en passant*, is the only one that can for a moment be entertained, it seems to me, and then only in the light of the facts just adduced. I admire, but cannot follow, the ingenious process by which Ophelia becomes (*Aberystwyth Studies*, VII, 42 ff.) "a kind of Kathleen Ni' Houlihan, or symbol of the Irish nationality."

[23] I find "innovation" used of this very event (*Cecil Manuscripts*, as above, p. 538) and Shakespeare elsewhere means a political upheaval by the word (see Wilson's *Hamlet*, p. 177), but there is still nothing to give it that meaning here.

[24] Edition cited, p. 562.

[25] Stow dates the arrival of the embassy "at the Tower-wharfe" "About the 5. of September." *Annales* (London, 1615), p. 795.

[26] Compare the different account by Jacque-Auguste de Thou: "Au milieu de la conversation qui se tenoit à une fenêtre du Palais, la Reine & l'Ambassadeur jet-

We are to recall not only Hamlet taking up the skull of Yorick, but Hamlet's words to that skull: "*Now get you to my lady's chamber*, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come; make her laugh at that." (V, i, 212-15.) I believe we may have a case of cause and effect here, but it seems impossible to guess which is cause, and which effect, whether the popular play gave rise to the story, or is capitalizing on it.[27]

Coming now to the ending of the play, I wish first to add a point to the association, grounds for which have already been given, of Claudius with Leicester. The last scandal of Leicester's life was that he died from a poisoned draft which he had meant for another—namely, his wife, of whom he was jealous. According to the scandalmongers, the Countess exchanged this poison for his medicine.[28] What other comment can there be on this than Laertes'

> He is justly serv'd;
> It is a poison temper'd by himself. (V, ii, 341-42.)

But it is four lines further on that the real ambiguities begin, and continue through seventy lines to the end.

> I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu!

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térent les yeux sur la tour de Londres, où l'on avoit exposé un grand nombre de têtes de criminels d'Etat. A cette vûe, Elisabeth crut devoir prévenir le ministre François, & pour empêcher que cet affreux spectacle ne la fit soupçonner de cruauté, elle parla fort au long sur les régles de la justice, & de la clémence des Rois; elle ajoûta ensuite: 'Vous voyez la tête du Comte d'Essex. Je l'avois élevé aux plus grandes dignités, & il avoit toute la faveur de la Reine; mais ce téméraire abusant de mes bontés a eu l'audace de croire que je ne pourrois jamais me paser de lui.'" *Histoire Universelle* (London, 1734), XIII, 611. Thus the legend gained currency abroad, especially as earlier conspirators against the Queen *had* had their heads "stuck up on poles" (see *Fugger Letters, Second Series*, p. 229).

[27] Here, then, is an explanation for those critics who have gone so far as to wonder why the only relics in the gravediggers' scene are detached skulls. Hamlet's jibes at the painting of female faces, here and to Ophelia, "I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another;" (III, i, 149-152), represent nothing very unusual in the literature of the time. Guilpin's "Satyra secunda" (*Skialetheia*, 1598), for instance, is devoted to cosmetic satire. It takes an extravagant form in *Der Bestrafte Brudermord* (Furness Variorum *Hamlet*, II, 128). See, for a pre-Shakespearean thrust at "payntinges," More's *Utopia*, ed. J. C. Collins (Oxford, 1904), p. 105, and cf. Collins' note, p. 225. At the same time, one cannot help thinking of Queen Elizabeth's grotesque refusal to face old age. *E.g.*, Ben Jonson told Drummond of Hawthornden: "Queen Elizabeth never saw herself after she became old in a true glass; they painted her, and sometymes would vermilion her nose." *Conversations*, ed. R. F. Patterson (London, 1923), p. 30.

[28] Harrison, p. 35.

In two ways the second half of this line is rather odd. In the first place, in the play the " wretched queen " is dead: why does the dying Hamlet say " adieu " to her? Are they not going to the same place (to put it theologically, as this play would)? When Romeo hears that Juliet is dead, his thought is that by dying he will join her,[29] not be separated from her: he therefore bids farewell to life, but not to her. This is the normal pattern. In drama we are used to the dying saying farewell to the *living*, or survivors saying farewell to the dying and the dead, but I can think of no instance, except the above, where the dying bid adieu to the dead. The second oddity is this word " queen " itself. Up to now Hamlet has invariably addressed the Queen as " mother." [30] That word " mother " is indeed the motive and the cue for Hamlet's passion. Only here does he say " queen," and not, I conjecture, without topical reason. Let it not be supposed that I am contending the Queen is Queen Elizabeth at any other point in the play, even though the psychoanalysts have found Hamlet to be in love with his mother and though Queen Elizabeth was old enough to be Essex's mother. It is a nonce identification, like that cry which rings out twice at the end of *Macbeth*: " Hail, King of Scotland! " To see a passing compliment to King James in those words is not to claim that Malcolm is King James. Of course in *Hamlet* Shakespeare is not indulging in any compliment to the present ruler: [31] rather, in " wretched " he is taking the view that Elizabeth lived to regret her favorite's death, a romantic view, eloquently vouched for by William Browne,[32] as well as

[29] " Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee to-night," (V, i, 34), and V, ii, 106 ff. In fact there is the same thought in *Hamlet*, in the pun on " union ": Is thy union here?/ Follow my mother."

[30] The only approach to this significant switch before had been in the formal and bitter statement,

> " You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;
> And,—would it were not so!—you are my mother." (III, iv. 15-16.)

[31] As J. Q. Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 320, remarks, Shakespeare " seems not to have forgiven Elizabeth for her heartless treatment of the unfortunate Essex, and her long imprisonment of Southampton. This may perhaps explain why he refused, in spite of several protests, to write, as did so many poets, an elegy on the great Queen who had taken such delight in his plays, or to express any grief at her death."

[32] *Britannia's Pastorals* (1613) follows, an allegory about Leicester and the Queen with one on Leicester's step-son, recalling the famous intrusion into the Queen's closet by Essex on his return from Ireland, when he took her by surprise

by Lytton Strachey. And certainly it is fact that she was wretched from the ills of old age, if not from a broken heart.

The point is that from here on, now that the plot is over and the time for ceremonious leave-taking has come, Hamlet is, by my postulation, at least as much Essex in Shakespeare's mind as he is Hamlet, and the first sign is this impression that it is a living queen who is being addressed here. But the main clue is in the persistent imagery of the stage and of the theatre that marks the ending of the play and makes it self-conscious, an imagery which seems to have struck none of the commentators. It begins with the very next lines:

> You that look pale and tremble at this chance,
> That are but mutes or audience to this act,
> Had I but time,—as this fell sergeant, death,
> Is strict in his arrest,—O! I could tell you—
> But let it be. Horatio, I am dead;
> Thou liv'st; report me and my cause aright
> To the unsatisfied.

We are first put in mind of the theatre, and then—after a curious and surely not purposeless allusion to death as a sergeant-at-arms—the theme of the faithful friend's telling Hamlet's story aright and so redeeming a wounded reputation —that theme is struck, and further insisted on when Hamlet wrests the poisoned cup away.

> O God! Horatio, what a wounded name,
> Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me.
> If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
> Absent thee from felicity awhile,
> And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
> To tell my story.

" with her hair about her face," and when, like Gertrude, she feared at first for her life:

> " And coming through a grove wherein his fair
> Lay with her breasts display'd to take the air,
> His rushing through the boughs made her arise,
> And dreading some wild beast's rude enterprise,
> Directs towards the noise a sharpen'd dart,
> That reach'd the life of his undaunted heart,
> Which when she knew, twice twenty moons nigh spent
> In tears for him, and died in languishment."

Book I, Song 4, 753-760. For various views as to why the Queen " gave her selfe over wholly to melancholly," see Camden, *op. cit.*, pp. 584-585; compare Devereux, II, pp. 203 ff.

In the words of John Chamberlain,[33] writing February 21, 1600-01, Essex defended himself at his trial in such a manner "that a man might easily perceive that, as he had ever lived popularly, so his chief care was to have a good opinion in the people's minds now at parting." He did not know that to forward that good opinion he would have after his death the greatest possible panegyrist. Yet, a few months earlier, in a letter to the Queen, he had prophesied correctly, though with undue bitterness: "they print me and make me speak to the world, and shortly they will play me upon the stage."[34]

The ending of *Hamlet* is full of word-play, of ambiguities and puns which have remained locked because no one has applied the key. We must look again at the line,

> Absent thee from *felicity* awhile.

Guilpin in *Skialetheia* satirised Essex as "Faelix" (or "Felix").[35] The reason for this appellation is not far to seek. We have only to recall Spenser's similar pun on "Devereux" in *Prothalamion*,[36]

> Joy have thou of thy noble victorie,
> And endlesse happinesse of thine owne name
> That promiseth the same:

where, as R. E. Neil Dodge points out, "Devereux" is taken as equivalent to "*devenir heureux* or simply *heureux*." Shake-

[33] Quoted by Winstanley, "*Hamlet*" *and the Scottish Succession*, p. 143.

[34] Harrison, p. 261.

[35] "Satyra prima," sig. C3v (Shakespeare Association Facsimiles, 1931; see G. B. Harrison's Introduction, pp. vii-viii):

> "For when great *Fœlix* passing through the street,
> Vayleth his cap to each one he doth meet,
> And when no broome-man that will pray for him,
> Shall have lesse truage than his bonnets brim,
> Who would not thinke him perfect curtesie?
> Or the honny-suckle of humilitie?
> The devill he is as soone: he is the devill,
> Brightly accoustred to bemist his evill:
> Like a Swartrutters hose his puffe thoughts swell,
> With yeastie ambition: *Signior Machiavell*
> Taught him this mumming trick, with curtesie
> T'entrench himselfe in popularitie,
> And for a writhen face, and bodies move,
> Be Barricadode in the peoples love."

[36] 152-154 (*Complete Poetical Works*, ed. R. E. Neil Dodge, Boston, 1908).

speare was thus neither the first nor the second poet to pun felicitously on the name! (Most *in*felicitously, according to our taste, but we have to remember how different the Elizabethan view was, that Shakespeare could play on words in deadly earnest, that Lady Macbeth could say, "I'll gild the faces of the groom withal; / For it must seem their guilt," that King Henry the Fourth angrily dismisses Worcester with the words, "You have good leave to leave us," that both Romeo and Juliet die with a *double-entendre* on their lips.)

The "war-like volley" of "young Fortinbras" is heard saluting "the ambassadors of England," whereupon Hamlet says,

> I cannot live to hear the news from England,
> But I do prophesy the election lights
> On Fortinbras: he has my dying voice.

Here we have Shakespeare going to great because dramatically inappropriate lengths to relate "the news from England" to the election lighting on Fortinbras. The question seems unprecedented, but I ask it: why the connective "But"? In the play the news from England has nothing to do with Fortinbras: that news is simply "That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead." Why should Hamlet with almost his last breath, at this climactic point in the drama, be showing any interest in those trivial false friends whom he hoisted with their own petard, "not shriving-time allowed"? Can it be that Shakespeare wants to connect Fortinbras and England for good current reasons? Fortinbras, this prince from another country, may here stand for James VI of Scotland,[37] soon to be James I of England, with whom Essex was in secret correspondence, whose unfortunate ally Essex (as well as Southampton) was. The name Fortinbras—"Strong-arm"—seems ridiculous to us when we think of the later James, but it superlatively fitted the James who was supposed to have overpowered with his own bare hands a would-be assassin on the day of the Gowry conspiracy, August 5, 1600.[38] It was a conservative prophecy, then,

[37] James had actually come from Norway in 1589, bringing back Anne of Denmark, whom he had married in person at Oslo, November 23rd. The Fortinbras-James equation dates back to Foard's article (*op. cit.*, p. 242) of 1889, but neither this writer nor Winstanley gives it any detailed consideration (the latter being handicapped, of course, by her belief that Hamlet is James).

[38] For a description based on the official accounts, see G. B. Harrison, *A Last Elizabethan Journal* (London, 1933), pp. 105-109.

this of Hamlet's and Shakespeare's, but it was made at a troubled time when no one could be sure who would be the next ruler, and all were anxious.

After those four last words of Hamlet, " The rest is silence," which happen to be foreshadowed at the beginning of that same letter of the Earl's from which I have already quoted: " Before . . . he that sends this enjoins himself eternal silence, . . ." [39] Horatio pronounces his benediction:

> Now cracks a noble heart. Good-night, sweet prince,
> And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!

Malone long ago pointed out that there is an echo here of Essex's twice-uttered prayer on the day of his execution: " lift my soul above all earthly cogitations, and when my life and body shall part, send Thy blessed angels to be near unto me, which may convey it to the joys in Heaven "; and again: " I pray . . . it would please the Everlasting God to send down His angels to carry my soul before His Mercy Seat." [40] As for " Good-night, sweet prince," Miss Winstanley notes that shortly after the execution the ballad-mongers had a broadside ready entitled " Essex' Last Good-night," every stanza of which ended with the refrain " good-night "! [41]

After exclamations have been exchanged on the dismal sight, Horatio says,

> . . . give order that these bodies
> High on a stage be placed to the view;
> And let me speak to the yet unknowing world
> How these things came about:

For this business of putting bodies on a stage there is no

[39] Harrison, *Essex*, p. 260.

[40] *Ibid.*, pp. 324-325 So much, on the historical side, for A. C. Bradley's question, " Why did Shakespeare here, so much against his custom, introduce this reference to another life? " (*Shakespearean Tragedy*, London, 1905, p. 147.) Essex's last speech is regularly considered to have influenced *Henry VIII*, II, i.

[41] " *Hamlet* " *and the Scottish Succession*, p. 144. " Essex's Last Good-night " and " The Death of Robert Devereux Earl of Essex " are in *The Roxburghe Ballads*, ed. W. Chappell (London, the Ballad Society, 1871), I, 564-574. It may be noted, apropos of my discussion of " Wretched queen, adieu! ", that the former has the line, " Farewell, Elizabeth, my gracious Queen! ", beginning a stanza of farewells. " Good-night " in ballads is, one would gather, a farewell applied regularly to doomed men. See F. J. Child's note, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (Boston, 1892), IV, 36.

precedent nor parallel in the Elizabethan drama.[42] Nor is there anything in the Hamlet saga to account for it.[43] I suggest that Shakespeare is playing with words here, beginning with the word " stage," which can mean, yes, a platform or " scaffold " (as the blundering 1st Quarto calls it [44]), but which can also mean the stage of the Globe theatre and be a continuation of the play's consciousness of itself, of the dramatist's references to his own creative art. (In fact a glance at a concordance or Schmidt's *Lexicon* will show that Shakespeare never uses the word " stage " elsewhere in any other concrete sense than the stage of a theatre.)

" Stage " is the first pun, and " world " is the second.

> . . . let me speak to the yet unknowing world
> How these things came about.

Scholars have seen a reference to the Globe Theatre at II, ii, 386. I suggest that there is a second allusion here. Dekker in fact made the identical pun:

> How wonderfully is the world altered! And no marvel, for it has lyen sick almost five thousand years: so that it is no more like the old *Theatre du munde*, than old Paris Garden is like the King's Garden at Paris. What an excellent workman, therefore, were he that could cast the *Globe* of it into a new mold.[45]

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[42] The best the editors can do is to quote from Arthur Brooke's poem *Romeus and Juliet*, 2817-2818:

> " The prince did straight ordain, the corses that were found
> Should be set forth upon a stage high raiséd from the ground,"

but the circumstances in the poem are entirely different, as the context makes clear, the bodies of the two lovers being the *corpora delicti* of a crime of which two living persons are accused:

> " Right in the selfsame form, showed forth to all men's sight,
> That in the hollow vault they had been found that other night;
> And eke that Romeus' man and Friar Laurence should
> Be openly examinéd; for else the people would
> Have murmuréd or feigned there were some weighty cause
> Why openly they were not called, and so convict by laws."

Ibid., 2819-2824.

[43] There is no hint that a funeral pyre is meant, such as Amlethus orders for Fengo in Saxo Grammaticus (" extruite rogum: " *Sources of Hamlet*, ed., Gollancz, London, 1926, p. 134). A funeral pyre would be Danish, but Shakespeare, as usual, is making no effort to be Danish.

[44] Thereby drawing attention to yet a third meaning for " stage ": the " stage " of execution (though " scaffold " also may mean the stage of a theatre, as it does in the comparable Prologue to *Henry V*).

[45] Quoted by Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 285 (from *The Guls Hornbook*, 1609).

But there is hardly need to quote Dekker when we have Jaques' "All the world's a stage," following upon the Duke's words about "This wide and universal theatre" in *As You Like It*, II, vii, 137 ff., the punning point of which was recaptured by Fleay in 1886.[46]

Thus Shakespeare says again that a tarnished reputation will be refurbished, here and now, in *Hamlet*.

> so shall you hear
> Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,
> Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters;
> Of deaths put on by cunning and forc'd cause,
> And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
> Fall'n on the inventors' heads; all this can I
> Truly deliver.

These lines fit the dramatic situation with almost mathematical exactitude, but they do not do badly for the Essex rebellion either.[47] The original defence of the Essex party was that their "purposes" had been grossly "mistook," that they had not been guilty of any act of treason. This would be the line that a friend to Essex's memory would therefore take.[48] And all

[46] F. G. Fleay, *A Chronicle History of the Life and Work of William Shakespeare* (London, 1886), p. 209: "The comparison of the world to a stage . . . suggests a date subsequent to the building of the Globe, with its motto of *Totus mundus agit historionem*." So Rosencrantz's "Ay, that they do, my lord; Hercules and his load too."

[47] "Carnal" is as flexible a word as any other here. While Dover Wilson glosses, "fleshly, adulterous," J. Q. Adams takes it as "murderous" (as in *Richard III*, IV, iv, 56), and comments: "And what would Horatio tell? The full guilt of Claudius from beginning to end, but not the secret shame of Gertrude. Hamlet never had revealed that. His mother's great sin died with her." Ed. *Hamlet* (Boston, 1929), p. 332. There were "casual slaughters" on the day of the uprising—the slaying of Essex's page and of several citizens and soldiers. The possibly topical bearing of these lines did not, I find, escape Foard, *op. cit.*, p. 124, though his passing suggestion has gone unheeded, even by Winstanley.

[48] Robert Pricket expressed himself freely in his publication of 1604, *Honors Fame in Triumph Riding. Or, the Life and Death of the Late Honorable Earle of Essex*:

> "He dyde for treason; yet no Traytor. Why?
> The treason done, he did it ignorantly.
> Intent and purpose in the act.
> Is that which makes a Traytors fact."

Grosart's reprint (1881), p. 17. Camden himself said: "This commotion which some call a fear and mistrust, others an oversight; others who censured it more hardly termed it an obstinate impatience, and seeking of revenge; and such as spoke worst of it called it an unadvised and indiscreet rashness, and to this day there are few that ever thought it a capital crime." *Annals*, ed. 1630, bk. iv, p. 178, quoted

knew, and some had seen with their own eyes, how the " purposes mistook " had " fall'n on the inventors' heads " (a grim pun, that!)—bringing death to Essex, Blount, Danvers, and other chief conspirators, bringing imprisonment and disgrace to Shakespeare's patron.

The other point to notice is, of course, the reiteration with which we are told that a tragical history is to be recounted. Again and again the point is made, and now Fortinbras says,

> Let us haste to hear it,
> And call the noblest to the audience.

The references to the theatre become increasingly plain.

The king-to-be continues,

> For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune;
> I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,
> Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

What " rights " is Fortinbras remembering? We have heard nothing of his rights, and they must remain forever a mystery unless we look beyond the play, for within it there is no explanation to be had; the commentators maintain a prudent silence.[49] In one sense this would be simply James Stuart's statement that he is entitled to the throne " in this kingdom " of England. " Rights of memory " are " unforgotten rights," going back to the descent of James from Henry VII, the first of the Tudors. But it follows that Shakespeare also has in mind another word, the word he uses ten lines further on: *rites*. In this sense " some rites of memory " are those which James (and Essex's friends generally, including Shakespeare) owe to the memory of the late Earl. (Nor did James prove ungrateful;[50] one of his first acts, even before he crossed the border, was to order the release of Southampton.) This second meaning

by Charlotte C. Stopes, *The Third Earl of Southampton* (Cambridge, 1922), p. 221. The view persists, *e. g.*, " Robert Essex, den die grausame Herrin hinrichten liess um einiger unbesonnener Redensarten und eines dummen Streiches willen." Hermann Conrad in *Preussische Jahrbücher*, LXXIX (1895), pp. 189-190.

[49] In a recent article William Witherle Lawrence has posed the question and admitted the difficulty of answering it. " Hamlet and Fortinbras," *PMLA*, LXI (September, 1946), 685-686.

[50] In the words of Lord Macaulay, " The new King had always felt kindly towards Lord Essex, and, as soon as he came to the throne, began to show favour to the House of Devereux, and to those who had stood by that house in its adversity." (" Lord Bacon," in *Critical and Historical Essays*, London, 1874, p. 367.)

thus links up with "Let us haste to hear it, / And call the noblest to the audience."

Horatio then says,

> Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
> And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more:

Hamlet's voice, yes,[51] but the voice of the popular Earl, who had done what he could to make James king. But finally the persistent theatrical imagery hints at another voice, the Voice of all these voices. Whose voice will "draw on more" than that of the popular dramatist himself?

> But let this same be presently perform'd,

Let this same *play* be presently perform'd—

> Even while men's minds are wild, lest more mischance
> On plots and errors happen.

There have been many futile debates over the word "wild," all of which would have been obviated if it had been understood that these lines were prompted by the Essex uprising and those months of anxiety and disillusion which followed upon it. Shakespeare was "of an age": before widening his claim Ben Jonson calls him "Soul of the age." It is an assumption consistent to the smallest detail that the closing lines of *Hamlet* are "the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time" (II, ii, 555).

Fortinbras now begins the final eulogy.

> Let four captains
> Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage.

That is to say (on the level of ambiguity being here considered), put Essex in a play! No one thinks of Hamlet as a soldier. He seems about as far as possible from that. There has been nothing to connect him with the military profession, except one word of Ophelia's in the line, "The courtier's,

[51] In the last scene, and in the last scene only, stress is laid on "this kingdom" as an elective monarchy—for presumably a very special reason. The explanation lies latent in these words of Dover Wilson's: "After all, was not the monarchy of Elizabeth and James an 'elective' one? The latter like Claudius owed his throne to the deliberate choice of the Council, while the Council saw to it that he had the 'dying voice' of Elizabeth, as Fortinbras has that of Hamlet." *Hamlet*, p. lv.

soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword " (III, i, 160). But " the general of our gracious empress," everybody knows and everybody knew, was a soldier *par excellence*. Even his jealous rival-in-command at Cadiz, Lord Howard, acknowledged him " a great soldier." [52] Moreover, to come back to Ophelia's line,

> The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword

—it fits Essex in a way that has not been hitherto suspected. As part of the Accession Day celebrations in 1595, Francis Bacon wrote an allegory concerning Essex which was presented before the Queen and many spectators.[53] Essex was met by " a melancholy, dreaming hermit, a mutinous, brain-sick soldier, and a busy, tedious secretary," representing the three divergent ambitions of that noble lord, and after supper each of the characters in turn delivered a pretty speech, the cloistered scholar calling him to the Muses, the courtier begging him to attend to matters of state, and the soldier urging him to seek his fortune in the field.

> For he was likely, had he been put on,
> To have prov'd most royally:

This is most daring, but protected of course by its ambiguity of reference. " All the world's a stage " now, and Essex, " had he been put on," would have proved a worthy king of England.

> and, for his passage,
> The soldiers' music and the rites of war
> Speak loudly for him.

Ostensibly " passage " means departure, death, and " Speak " is a word of command. But " passage " can also mean " conduct " (*e. g.*, " passages of life," *I Henry IV*, III, ii, 8), and" Speak " can be indicative, with " rites " being turned back to " rights ": [54] the soldiers' music and the rights of war speak loudly for the good conduct of the Earl of Essex: he deserved a better death.

> Take up the bodies:

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[52] Strachey, p. 106.

[53] See Bacon's *Works*, ed. Basil Montagu (Philadelphia, 1857), II, 533-536; see also Harrison, *Essex*, pp. 90-91. In " The Statesman's Speech " is the advice, " To conclude, let him be true to himself."

[54] The Quartos and Folios very naturally confuse the homonyms, the Quartos reading " right " (singular) here, while ten lines above, the Folios have " rites."

This is the reading of the 2nd Quarto. The Folios as well as the 1st Quarto have the singular:

> Take up the body: such a sight as this
> Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.

Essex should have died a soldier's death. Instead, his severed head was held up for the rude mob to gawk at, and the body left sprawled in the straw of a scaffold.

So concludes my *explication de texte* of the ending of *Hamlet* at a level which is of little more than historical interest today, but which puts the play in its time and tries to recapture the associations of the original audiences. I do not claim that two meanings are better than one; I claim only that there is reason to suspect that two meanings are there, and that the playgoers of 1601 and 1602 could be depended on to catch them. In the light of both the old and the new points here presented, it seems to me an hypothesis worthy of serious and unprejudiced consideration that the last seventy lines of *Hamlet*, besides winding up greatly a great tragedy, constitute under the surface Shakespeare's farewell to the man who inspired that tragedy, with an attendant prophecy, as well as a fairly plain and continuous declaration that he is putting Essex on the stage. It is here, at the ceremonious close, that the dramatist would have been most under the temptation to step out of his timeless creation into time, or rather, like the riddling Hamlet, to bestride timelessness and time at once. This hypothesis will serve to explain certain marked peculiarities of the ending (as well as of other parts) of *Hamlet*, for which no other single explanation has ever been offered—except that easy one, the commentator's last and all too habitual resort, that Shakespeare was writing carelessly. Far from having written this ending carelessly, he seems to have felt, with his chief character,

> O! 'tis most sweet,
> When in one line two crafts directly meet.
> (III, iv, 209-10.)

The conjecturing that there are two crafts here takes away that Olympian Shakespeare, that Shakespeare who never alludes to anything contemporary, of whom some critics have been blindly fond, but it leaves us a characteristically serene Shakespeare,

who spoke out reassuringly at a time when men's minds were wild, paying his respects to a popular idol and prophesying an untroubled succession for James.

Part Two

It seems to me that there are four principal objections to be urged against the theory: first (and this is beyond dispute), that it has not been proved; secondly, that it outrages our critical sensibilities by being in its comparison of characters and circumstances too crude; thirdly, that in other ways it is too ingenious (where a simple and natural explanation is at hand); and fourthly, that even if Shakespeare had had the sympathies postulated he would not have dared to give even covert expression to them.

The burden of proof lies with the other side, and for many skeptics the failure of the data and the arguments stemming therefrom to add up to proof will be in itself a sufficient objection. Such readers might be willing to entertain, perhaps have entertained in the past, on much more slender evidence, a theory about Lyly's *Endymion*, or indeed *Love's Labour's Lost*. But *Hamlet*, if mysterious at all, is not mysterious in the way that those plays are—it is sufficient unto itself as a drama—and to weave a web of double meanings around it seems idle, an effect without a proper cause. (A more prudent question is how much one would grant in the way of an occasional cobweb, a topical allusion here and there, with perhaps a cluster of them at the end?)

What would impress us? Short of an unequivocal statement of intention from Shakespeare himself, we should at least require a contemporary reference that made the Hamlet-Essex equation (though it could still be argued that an innocent play was being taken topically). The nearest I have been able to come to such evidence is in two references to the late Earl that connect him, in the most casual way, with the plot of *Hamlet*, not necessarily Shakespeare's.[55] Indeed, there are no

[55] There is this stanza in "Verses upon the report of the death of the right Honorable the Lord of Essex," a ballad which clumsily attains to 792 lines:

> "I cannot sleepe one winke, thy troubled spirit
> Doth still pursue me wheresoere I goe.
> I cannot rest by day, nor sleepe by night,

certain allusions to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* before 1604 (the Gabriel Harvey note—see above, footnote 3—being of undetermined date). For all that may be said, ruefully, about the accidental character of such survivals, the most that the other side can postulate is that there was a sly understanding that did not cause much of a flurry. If the play had been a *cause célèbre* reaching the Privy Council, we should surely have heard.

In passing on to the second main objection it is important to note what advantage the theory is taking of our special ignorances—our uncertainty in regard to the date of the play and our ignorance of its immediate source. Date the play a few months earlier than I date it, and my interpretation of the ending becomes impossible. As for the *Ur-Hamlet*, no one has taken kindly to the suggestion of the original propounder of the Essex theory [56] that Shakespeare himself wrote the *Ur-Hamlet* in 1589, capitalising on the interest in things Danish resulting from the marriage of James in that year to Anne of Denmark, and that the 1603 Quarto represents an intermediate version that would yet again be revised. Rejecting this hypothesis, we are left with a textual mystery, and of course know nothing about Shakespeare's major source except that it contained a ghost that cried Revenge. How close was it to the present plot? Did it contain a rebellion and other matters that are being laid to the ghost of Essex? One can always ask, too, why the Essex connections, if intended, are not closer. If the Earl of Leicester's poisoning of the first Earl of Essex is really being recalled, the elder Hamlet should have died, not from poison in his ears but in his food. "But after all, Shakespeare had to consider dramatic effect, was primarily, let us never forget,

> Thy Ghost still asks me what I meane to doe.
> Reuenge! Reuenge! nought but revenge I heare;
> Revenge! thy Ghost still soundeth in myne eare."

Ballads from Manuscripts, ed. W. R. Morfill (Hertford, the Ballad Society), II, 224. *Sir Thomas Smithes Voiage and Entertainment in Rushia* (London, 1605) contains three references to Essex, in one of which his conspiracy is compared with a contemporary Russian conspiracy. The rebelling Prince says (sig. K) "his fathers Empire and Government, was but as the *Poeticall Furie in a Stage-action*, compleat yet with horrid and wofull Tragedies: a first, but no second to any *Hamlet*; and that now *Revenge*, just *Revenge* was comming with his Sworde drawne against him, his royall Mother, and dearest Sister, to fill up those Murdering Sceanes," etc.

[56] See Foard's article, as cited above, footnote 1.

writing a play," the other side will point out—thereby having it both ways. It may be so, but poisoning and other elements possibly introduced by Shakespeare into the plot are too commonplace, especially when one thinks of Italianate influences, for anyone to wonder much about a particular source for them.

Moreover, if Shakespeare was leaving us a " signature " in " Absent thee from felicity awhile," he had another opportunity that he very strangely passed by. Essex was thirty-three when he died. It would not have affected the dramatic structure one whit to make the gravedigger give the figure for Hamlet's age as " three-and-thirty " instead of " thirty." The dramatist's failure to give us a hint in this relatively safe yet pointed way counts, in my mind, heavily against the theory. If ever there was an opportunity for a topical allusion, that was it, and a round number in the midst of what seems to be otherwise careful arithmetic in the 2nd Quarto and 1st Folio (Yorick's skull lying " i' the earth three-and-twenty years ") can hardly be made to serve.

But here higher truths intervene, as they do with Hamlet's character. The figures for the hero's age belie our total impression, just as no one functioning as a critic is going to be content to call Hamlet " a woman-hater." It is always embarrassing to compare the transformed character in a play or story with its original, even when there is known to be that relationship. To premise such a relationship is doubly embarrassing, and perhaps, in the light of the procrustean crudities that will inevitably result, inexcusable. The lines are, at best, to be faintly drawn, and then they may fit others just as well. As a colleague remarks, if this is the game we are playing, a good case could be made out — so far as character goes — for John Donne as the original of Hamlet! (And here the ages fit!)

Thirdly, let us approach the details of the ending more open-mindedly. In an actual performance—and that is the test—who finds anything odd in the line, " I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu! "? Did Shakespeare ever dream that we should dwell on Hamlet's switch from " mother " to " queen "? It could be chance, or ceremony, or, if we are bent on extracting something from it, a subtle indication that Hamlet's problem has finally been resolved—that he feels free at last. As for a dying character saying adieu to a dead one, the

queen has just fallen, and events are crowding one upon another fast: we may separate them as readers, weighing intervals, but this we cannot do as spectators. Bradley in his study may be disturbed and offer an untenable explanation: " he remembers his wretched mother and bids her adieu, ignorant that she has preceded him." [57] This assumes that Hamlet is not in command of his faculties. All that he yet says and does nobly refutes any such notion. Say rather that the solution of this and other questions is to get the play out of the study and onto the stage, where such questions will not be raised.

Looking at it from this angle we shall not brood, either, over

> I cannot live to hear the news from England,
> But I do prophesy the election lights
> On Fortinbras.

The words are in response to Osric's explanation of the " war-like noise ":

> Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,
> To the ambassadors of England gives
> This war-like volley.

Maybe, *sub specie aeternitatis*, Hamlet ough not to waste his last energies by showing interest in the fairly certain fate of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (though that, too, can be argued and one can say that he takes a certain pride in the way he has outwitted his enemies). But from a playwright's point of view, it is perfectly natural, when these separate arrivals have just been announced, for Hamlet to mention them both and, moreover, distinguish between them. For the " But " can be taken as putting " the news from England " in its proper subordinate place: " I cannot live to hear the news from England (and I do not care about that), but (to pass on to what really matters), I do prophesy, etc."

It is enough to indicate thus the direction a protest against " unfair " questions (the kind that gives lunatics and theorists their opportunities) may take: Shakespeare wrote *currente calamo* a play that was never meant to be pondered over

[57] Bradley, *op. cit.*, p. 147. Harley Granville-Barker, ignoring all indications that the queen *is* dead, presents us at this juncture with a " still-agonizing mother." " Speechless, she can yet have heard all; at the end nothing has been spared her." *Prefaces to Shakespeare*, I (Princeton, 1946), p. 156.

minutely; matters puzzling the overattentive student (when the student *is* being overattentive, not simply inattentive) originated in dramaturgical convenience or dramaturgical carelessness. So it is with what is doubtless the biggest crux here, Fortinbras' accession to the Danish throne: [58] Shakespeare at the last minute assigns him "rights of memory in this kingdom" in order to justify the claim. We are in a theatre, not a courtroom, and it is idle—though a characteristic scholarly error—to ask for documentation. It is like asking what songs the sirens sang, or what happened to Lady Macbeth's children, or to Cassio's wife.

Finally, even if we allow Shakespeare the personal or political sympathies postulated, how could he have dared to be understood as expressing them? Never at any time did the Queen permit the question of the succession to be discussed, and of course to say of Essex, after his rebellion,

> For he was likely, had he been put on,
> To have prov'd most royally:

was to lay oneself open to the charge of treason. In two popular, oft reprinted poems Shakespeare had declared himself a follower of the now convicted and imprisoned Southampton, and the dramatist had openly admired Essex. Moreover, the traitorous use to which *Richard II* had been put on the eve of the conspiracy had called for close questioning of Shakespeare's company. For a man so suspect to take further risks in those arbitrary times seems little less than suicidal. Indeed, the need for craft and caution in public utterances did not cease with the reign of James, as is shown by the case of Samuel Daniel, who, when his drama *Philotas* was published in 1605, had to answer charges before the privy council that that play dealt sympathetically with the Essex rebellion. He was fortunately able to show "that the first three acts had been read by the master of the revels and Lord Mountjoy" in 1600, before the rebellion.[59]

[58] Perhaps an explanation quite good enough is that furnished by G. B. Harrison in his recent edition of the *Major Plays and the Sonnets* (New York, 1948), p. 654, that "with the disappearance of all the family of the original King Hamlet the situation reverts to what it was before the death of Fortinbras' father. See I, i, 80-95."

[59] *D. N. B.*, XIV, 28.

On the other hand, it was permissible and even customary in those last two years of the Queen's reign to refer to the late popular Earl (even in letters to the Earl's traditional enemy Sir Robert Cecil) with regretful respect. Eighteen months after the execution a German visitor found "Essex' Last Goodnight" was still being sung—even at Court![60] To pass over this and other anonymous eulogies, the second year of the new monarch's reign, the year of the 2nd Quarto, saw the publication of Robert Pricket's *Honors Fame in Triumph Riding, or, the Life and Death of the Late Honorable Earle of Essex*, which hints that the Earl was the victim of the machinations of his enemies and stoutly declares:

> It's false to say, hee would a King have bin:
> From faith & honor he made no such digression:
> His heart was cleare from such so foule a sin,
> He always stood for this approv'd Succession,
> Which happily doeth now the Throne possesse:
> Heavens mighty God protect his Mightinesse.
> Dead Earle, amidst bright Angels wings,
> *Amen* thy heavenly Spirit sings.[61]

It was evidently with reference to this poem that Francis Morice wrote to Sir B. Gawdy: "well and feelingly written and I think will not hereafter to be had as they are already called in and the printer called in question."[62] Pricket went to prison for his poem, only to be released soon after by appealing to Lord Salisbury.[63]

Indeed the picture of the censorship at this period is full of contradictions. In March of the year in which Daniel was charged and the three authors of *Eastward Hoe* imprisoned, it was recorded that the players do not "forbear to present upon their stage the whole course of the present Time, not sparing either King, State, or Religion, in so great Absurdity, and with such Liberty, that any would be afraid to hear them."[64]

If Shakespeare had been taken to task for *Hamlet*, he could have replied that he was just revising an old play, dating back

[60] J. E. Neal, *Queen Elizabeth* (London, 1934), p. 379.
[61] Ed. Grosart, p. 20.
[62] Historical MSS. Commission, *Gawdy MSS.* (1885), p. 92.
[63] *D. N. B.*, XLVI, 348.
[64] Winwood's *Memorials*, II, 54, cited by Virginita C. Gildersleeve, *Government Regulation of the Elizabethan Drama* (New York, 1908), p. 101.

to the 80's; besides (the other side will continue), his ambiguity at the end is very clever and "unconvictable," as is shown by its failure to trouble modern scholars. Moreover, he had himself found censorship a whimsical thing and was evidently willing to take his chances with it. There is one conspicuous case where it was exceedingly vigilant with him, and one conspicuous case where it was exceedingly relaxed. The case of vigilance is the 1600 quarto of *II Henry IV*,[65] where such lines as IV, i, 55-79, doubtless written in all innocence, were apparently taken by the censor months later as referring to Essex and struck out, and indeed the whole play was mutilated.

Yet in the 1598 quarto of *I Henry IV* Shakespeare turned a compliment to the Queen into a hit, and the censor let it pass. It was all right for Falstaff to say (I, ii, 28 ff.), "let us be Diana's foresters, gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon; and let men say, we be men of good government, being governed as the sea is, by our noble and chaste mistress the moon, under whose countenance we steal." This is a compliment followed by a harmless jest. But the Prince's reply is something else again: "Thou sayest well, and it holds well too; for the fortune of us that are the moon's men doth ebb and flow like the sea, being governed as the sea is, by the moon." This is a glance at the well known uncertainty of the Queen's favor. As Dover Wilson remarks in his edition,[66] "Diana being a common title for Elizabeth, this talk about 'minions of the moon' seems pretty daring, esp. as it exactly describes the condition of her favorites."[67]

What then are we to conclude? On May 10, 1601, "the Privy Council wrote to certain Justices of the Peace in Middlesex, concerning the players at the Curtain, who, it was reported, were representing upon the stage in their interludes 'the persons of some gentlemen of good desert and quallity that

[65] See Alfred Hart, *Shakespeare and the Homilies* (Melbourne, 1934), pp. 154-218.
[66] Cambridge, 1946, p. 120.
[67] On Elizabeth as Diana or Cynthia or "the Mortal moon" in the flattery or allusions of the time, see Elkin C. Wilson, *England's Eliza* (Cambridge, Mass., 1939), Ch. V, "Diana"; also the present writer, *Endymion in England* (New York, 1944), Ch. III, "Endymion in Court Intrigue." N. J. Halpin thought not only that the "fair vestal throned by the west" of *M. N. D.*, II, i, 158 ff., was Queen Elizabeth but that the "little western flower" was none other than the first Lady Essex (*Oberon's Vision in the Midsummer-Night's Dream*, London, 1843).

are yet alive under obscure manner, but yet in such sorte as all the hearers may take notice both of the matter and the persons that are meant thereby.' " [68] Did this boldness of the players at the Curtain (about which we hear nothing further) give Shakespeare, about to compose his version of *Hamlet*, his cue to go and do likewise? Or did he, on the contrary, take warning from such scandalous examples and their usual high price in punishment?

On the whole, the odds are against his taking the calculated risk. He will capitalise on current events so far as to have a rebellion in his play, but he will be careful to put it down with

> There's such divinity doth hedge a king,
> That treason can but peep to what it would,
> Acts little of his will. (IV, v, 123-125.)

The lines are so grand that one can forget it is a villain who says them.

Two lesser alternatives may stem from my examination of the ending. Shakespeare may be thinking of James in giving a prince from another country the throne, without especially having Essex in mind as Hamlet (though the dual reference, as the stanza from Pricket further shows, would seem almost inevitable). Or, putting all politics aside, it may be granted that the author in his constant theatrical imagery and terminology is referring, as he concludes his play, to his own art. And that by itself would be a fact of no small interest.

A final possibility is that, even as his sonnets may be imagined as having had both a public and a private meaning, so Shakespeare here *was* making the dual reference, but privately, or for the initiated few, without intending to be—and without being—understood by " the general."

One can only end by reiterating that the burden of proof lies with the other side, whereas what we have from there consists of suspicions based on circumstantial evidence. Perhaps the overall moral is that we ought not to consider *Hamlet* too curiously. Once we start, we shall be led, link by link, to strange historical conclusions.

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[68] Gildersleeve, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

THE ACCENTUAL THEORY OF HEBREW PROSODY: A FURTHER STUDY IN RENAISSANCE INTERPRETATION OF BIBLICAL FORM

By Israel Baroway

I

If Sidney's celebrated "'tis not rhyming and versing that maketh the poet" epitomizes the general tradition of the English Renaissance, no less does his less famous "the Senate of Poets hath chosen verse as their fittest rayment. . . ."[1] Verse was not a *sine qua non* of imaginative literature, but it enhanced imaginative revelation. This view applied to sacred as well as to secular literature: the Bible, transcendently poetic by poesy's every test,[2] pulsated rhythmically under the divine passion, even though translation had obliterated the Hebrew cadences and time had erased the memory of their shaping principles. These cadences and these principles challenged the curiosity of the literary explorer of the Renaissance.

Some of his "discoveries" have already been noted. All criticism agreed that there was a science of Hebrew prosody; but the interpretation varied. The earliest and most pervasive was the quantitative interpretation, originated by Philo and Josephus, transmitted by the Church Fathers, and epitomized, in the seventeenth century, by the "scientific" authentication of Gomarus.[3] A later and sounder interpretation, beginning in the sixteenth century, challenged the validity of this classical view. The present study proposes to investigate some facets of this challenge.

A word about its scope. It does not presume to trace evolutionary developments or direct influences or to appraise, beyond the demands of lucid exposition, the scholarly validity of the

[1] Sir Philip Sidney, "An Apology for Poetry," *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, ed. Smith, 2. 160.

[2] I. Baroway, "The Bible as Poetry in the English Renaissance," *JEGP* 32 (1933), 447-72.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 472-80; cf. also the writer's two articles, "The Hebrew Hexameter . . ." *ELH* 2 (1935), 66-91 and "The Lyre of David. . . ." *ELH* 8 (1941), 119-142.

challenge. It proposes (1) to explore backgrounds as an orientation for further investigation of the " accentual " school of interpretation, embodied mainly in the work of Wither; (2) to present several significant phases of the newer interpretation, as revealed on the continent; (3) to demonstrate English participation in the movement; (4) in general, to reveal something of the soil from which flowered more recent interpretations of biblical prosody. As another link in a chain of studies about the Bible in the Renaissance, it hopes to show one more direction of that aesthetic compulsion which drove the man of letters into the awesome realm of the Sacred Word. If Tremellius or Steuchus or Scaliger or Vossius or Wither, following a new vision, sees it imperfectly, other critics, in other areas of Renaissance literary history, did so too; the daring and the groping are as revealing as the vision of the gleam. And if the details of their criticism seem naive to modern scholarship, these men, as critics, see more truly than did the supporters of the quantitative tradition, including the redoubtable Gomarus, for all his " steadfast rules " that gave " exactitude " and " perfection " to the quantitative principle. These men perceive that Hebrew prosody is governed by some kind of accentual principle; they seem dimly to perceive the parallel structure of Hebrew verse; they perceive, even though they may not apprehend clearly, the free accentual rhythm of Hebrew verse. And, above all, they realize that they do not have the final answer. This way lies truth.

2

Ultimately, of course, the source of Semitic scholarship in the Renaissance is Jewish. Though the province of Hebrew studies in the English Renaissance is a very dark area of cultural history, it seems reasonably well established that the contributions of rabbinical scholars like Levita and David Kimchi in Hebrew grammar or of Kimchi and Rashi in the interpretation of biblical Hebrew were primary and germinal; and that such scholarship was channeled to Christendom through converts like Tremellius, as well as by Christian Hebraists.[4] At another time, I propose to elaborate the subject

[4] S. A. Hirsch, " Early English Hebraists . . . Johann Reuchlin," *A Book of*

of Hebrew studies in Tudor-Stuart England; for the present, it is sufficient to suggest that the accentual theory may have entered England through such lexical works as Pagninus' *Thesaurus Linguae Sanctae*[5] and Buxorf's *Thesaurus Grammaticus Linguae Sanctae*,[6] which, respectively, had been reprinted five times from 1579 to 1614 and five times from 1609 to 1650,[7] and which had cited a number of rabbinical writers, grammarians, and poets who had either expounded biblical versification or had shaped later Hebrew prosody, from the tenth century on, in its clear modern accentual direction: Ibn Librat of Bagdad (tenth century); Ibn Gabirol and Jehudah Halevy (Spanish poets of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, respectively); Abraham Ibn Ezra (twelfth century wandering scholar); Ibn Yachya (fifteenth century Portuguese grammarian); and Ibn Chabib (fifteenth century resident of Lisbon, the Levant and southern Italy), who, as we shall see, was Steuchus' authority on Hebrew prosody.[8] It is significant that Buxtorf's text was used by grammer school students, in 1636, at Rotherham School and possibly at other schools taught by Charles Hoole.[9] And though Wither's treatment of biblical metrics does not cite these particular sources, it does refer, marginally or textually, to the rabbinical David Kimchi, Maimonides, Jonathan ben Uzziel, Rashi, "Rabbi Barachias," and other unidentified "Rabbines."[10] Moreover, examination of the second Bodleian Catalogue shows that a wide variety of

Essays, London, 1925, pp. 116-59; David Daiches, *The King James Version of the Bible . . .* Chicago, 1941; E. I. Rosenthal, *Rashi and the English Bible*, Manchester, 1940; Harris Fletcher, *The Use of the Bible in Milton's Prose*, Urbana, 1929.

[5] Sanctes Pagninus, *Thesaurus Linguae Sanctae*, Leyden, 1529; I have examined the Paris edition of 1548, published by Robertus Stephanus.

[6] Johann Buxtorf, *Tractatus Brevis de Prosodia Metrica*, Book II of *Thesaurus Grammaticus Linguae Sanctae*, Bale, 1609, pp. 578-611.

[7] Wilhelm Bacher, "Hebrew Dictionaries," *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, New York, 1901-1906, 4. 582, and "Hebrew Grammars," *Ibid.*, 6. 74, based upon M. Steinschneider, *Bibliographisches Handbuch . . .*, Leipzig, 1859, and his "Zusätze . . .," *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen* 13 (1896), 345-79 and 441-89 and N. Porges, "Nachträge zu Steinschneiders Zusätzen and Berichtungen . . .," *Ibid.*, 15 (1898), 493-508, which I have also consulted.

[8] Pagninus, *op. cit.*, p. 1; Buxtorf, *op. cit.*, pp. 582-609, *passim.*

[9] Charles Hoole, *A New Discovery of the Old Arte of Teaching Schoole . . .*, ed. Thiselton Mark, Syracuse, 1912, p. 217.

[10] George Wither, *A Preparation to the Psalter* (1619) (Spenser Society, No. 37, Manchester, 1884), *passim.* "Rabbi Barachias" may be Ibn Baruch or Baruch of Benevento.

Hebrew works was available to English students of Hebrew a year after Wither published his treatise: commentaries by Rashi, Levi ben Gerson, Abarbanel, Ibn Ezra, Maimonides, Nachmanides, Menachem Recanati; grammatical texts by Levita; grammatical and lexical works by David and Moses Kimchi,[11] as well as a diversity of grammars, lexicons, and biblical texts and exegeses, from Reuchlin, Münster, Pagninus, and Montanus to Tremellius, Steuchus, Buxtorf, and J. J. Scaliger.[12]

With many learned sources already accessible, the Elizabethan and Jacobean were not forced to accept blindly the patristic postulates. Sidney's observation, in the early 1580's, that Hebrew poems—the *Psalms*, Solomon's *Song of Songs*, *Ecclesiastes*, and *Proverbs*, as well as *Job* and the songs of Moses and Deborah—were "fully written in meeter, as all learned Hebricians agree, although the rules be not fully found,"[13] suggests acquaintance with the conflicting scholarly currents; indeed, Sidney may have been questioning the quantitative principle itself, since his only specific ascription of source, Tremellius, almost certainly regards Hebrew verse as accentual;[14] and, as we shall see, a forthright challenge to the quantitative tradition had been published in France, in 1578, when Sidney was there. In 1591, John Harington, too, may be suggesting the same conflicting views and surely is following either Tremellius or Sidney when he says:

> some part of the Scripture was written in verse, as the Psalmes of *Dauid* & certain other songs of *Deborah*, of *Salomon* & others, which the learnedest diuines doe affirme to be verse and finde they are in meeter, though the rule of the Hebrew verse they agree not on. . . .[15]

In 1589, the author of *The Arte of English Poesie* notes not only meter but "a maner of rime, as hath bene *of late* obserued

[11] Thomas James, *Catalogus Universalis Librorum Bibliothecae Bodleianae* . . . Oxford, 1620, *passim*.

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] Sidney, *op. cit.*, 1.155; 1.158.

[14] Cf. footnotes 22-26, inclusive, and accompanying text.

[15] John Harington, "A Brief Apology for Poetry," *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, *op. cit.*, 2.207.

by learned men." [16] By 1619, when *A Preparation to the Psalter* observes that

> the auncient Iewes had both such kinde of Verses, as some of ours are and the same freedom in their composures that we use,[17]

it would appear that the challenge to the classical view had entered the secular stream—even though reference to Hebrew prosody remains rare and incidental to other considerations.

Whatever the original source of the challenge—rabbinic or otherwise—there was recognition, even in the patristic tradition, of a difference between Hebrew and classical versification. As early as the first century of the common era, Origen had observed it:

> Now the verses among the Hebrews are different from those among us.[18]

Even Jerome, probably the major patristic influence upon the quantitative tradition, had noted that *Job* was composed, mainly, in what I have termed, in another place, quantitative (hexameter) "rhythm," as distinguished from quantitative "metre." [19] But, more significantly, he had also observed that *Job* sometimes released itself from the law of quantity altogether into what he, himself, calls a "rhythm," "composed of *numbers* freed from the law of metre" [20]—into "rhythm," or "numbers" that must be accentual, since it is not quanti-

[16] "The Arte of English Poesie," *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, *op. cit.*, 2. 10. Italics are mine.

[17] Wither, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

[18] Origen, *Analecta Sacra*, ed. Joannes Baptista Card. Pitra (Paris, 1876-92, 7 vols.), 2. 341: *οἱ στίχοι οὖν, οἱ παρ' Ἑβραίοις, ἕτεροί εἰσιν παρὰ τοὺς παρ' ἡμῖν.*

[19] A distinction in Quintilian, between rhythm and metre, is that rhythm observes the quantity of the foot, but not the order of the syllables of the foot. Thus, hexameter rhythm need not run in dactyls and spondees, so long as the feet maintain the dactyl-spondee quantity; a free interjection of ascending anaepests among the descending dactyls and an indiscriminate use of spondees would combine to form a hexameter rhythm. (Hexametri versus sunt, dactylo spondeoque currentes, et propter linguae idioma crebro recipientes *et alios pedes, non earundem syllabarum, sed eorundem temporum*), in Jerome, "In Librum Job (Praefatio)," *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J. P. Migne, Paris, 1844-88, 28. 1082. Cf. "The Hebrew Hexameter, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-5. Jerome does not call this kind of verse "rythmus"; I have applied the Quintilianic term to it.

[20] Jerome, "In Librum Job (Praefatio)," *Scripturae Sacrae Cursus Completus*, ed. J. P. Migne, Paris, 13. 275: "Interdum quoque *rythmus* ipse dulcis et tinnulus fertur *numeris* lege metri solutis; quod metrici magis quam simplex lector intelligunt." Italics are mine.

tative. "Rhythm," or "numbers," bears in the middle ages and in the Renaissance, a special meaning, to be elaborated later, by Scaliger and Vossius, and by Du Cange. As expounded by Augustine and Bede, this interpretation of "rhythm" and "numbers" colors the nature of the accentual interpretation of both Scaliger and Vossius. Briefly, it differentiates "rhythm," or "numbers," from "metre" thus: "rhythm," or "numbers," merely counts the *number* of the syllables in a given foot, but does not, like "metre," observe the quantity of these syllables.[21] This may well be what Jerome meant by "rhythm," by "numbers freed from the law of metre" (rythmus . . . numeris lege metri solutis), as distinguished from quantity in *Job* (dactylo-spondeoque currentes . . . et alios pedes, non earundem syllabarum, sed eorundem temporum). This, probably, is what Tremellius meant by saying that the Psalms, and other poems "sunt *rythmici*; non prosa oratione scripti . . . sed *numeris* adstricti ad commoditatem memoriae & cantus."[22] Hence, this is probably Sidney's inference about the nature of biblical prosody when he identified, as lyric verse, the *Psalms*, the books of Solomon, *Job*, and the songs of Deborah and Moses, "which beside other, the learned *Emmanuell Tremelius* and Franciscus Iunius *doe entitle the poeticall part of Scripture*."[23] Tremellius, Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge and translator of the Hebrew Old Testament into Latin, refers (in Sidney's source, the preface to his poetic division of the Old Testament), not to compositions in "measure," or "quantity," but in "rhythm" and "numbers," organized for "memory and singing." The poems, indeed, are suitably "numbered" so that they may be sung in religious worship:[24] the phrasing suggests a verse similar in principle to

[21] Cf. text to notes 42 (Scaliger); 50 and 56 (Vossius); 58 (Du Cange).

[22] *Testamenti Veteris Biblia Sacra*, . . . Latini recens ex Hebraeo facti brevibusque Scholiis illustrati ab Immanuele Tremellio & Francisco Iunio (Geneva, 1590), (the earliest edition I have seen) Pars Tertia, p. A3: . . . Itaque hos libros omneis communiter vocamus Psalmos, quia sunt rythmici; non prosa oratione scripti, ut omneis alii (etsi in his *Cantica quaedam exstant elegantissima Moschis, Deborae, Davidis, Jeschahjae, Jechizkijae, Jirmejae, & Chabbakkuki inspersa*) sed numeris adstricti ad commoditatem memoriae & cantus. . . .

[23] Sidney, *op. cit.*, 1.158. Italics are mine. Cf. my article, "Tremellius, Sidney, and Biblical Verse," *MLN* 49 (1934), 146-7, about Sidney's identification of these poems as lyric verse. Junius' main contribution to the Tremellius Bible was that of an editor.

[24] *Testamenti Veteris* . . . , *op. cit.*, p. A3: Tertium [the third division of

that which the Christian Church introduced into Western literature and into its own religious service—the non-quantitative accented, numbered modern verse. So interpreted, the Tremellius Old Testament would have diffused the accentual interpretation widely throughout England and the continent; published originally in 1575-79 at Frankfort and in 1580 at London and in many later editions,[25] the Tremellius Old Testament—with the New Testament and Apocrypha—became " almost as standard a Latin translation for the Protestant as the Vulgate long before had become for the Catholic." [26]

Though the primary derivation and the exact evolution of the accentual interpretation of biblical verse lie in the shadows, the interpretation itself was manifestly known in England by the 80's. In the year 1578,—during the period that Tremellius was publishing his Latin Old Testament with its preface (1575-79), and in the very year that Sidney was on his mission in France [27] —the works of Augustinus Steuchus (1496-1549), famous Italian churchman, director of the Vatican library, and delegate to the Tredentine Council, were being published in France.[28] Steuchus clearly repudiated the quantitative tradition—and he did so upon Jewish authority, the *Darke No'Am* of Rabbi Moses Ba'al Shem-Tob Ibn Chabib; Ibn Chabib had not only lived in Italy, but his " summary of Hebrew poetics and versification based on Aristotle's ' Poetics,' " had been published (with the grammar, *Marpe Lashon*), at Venice, in 1506.[29] Though I find

Scripture] vero genus est Psalmorum, hoc est, librorum in quibus res a Mosche Prophetisque traditae & sancto Dei Spiritu testatae *aptis numeris* exponuntur . . . hi [the poetic books] vero *numerosa* & brevi ad memoriam, figurata ad vim & efficacitatem oratione protulerunt eadem documenta voluntatis Dei. . . . Nam libros qui a Davidi aliisque viris Dei fuerunt traditi *ut in Ecclesia canerentur*, eos . . . singulariter Psalmos dici & dicendos esse agnoscimus. . . . (Italics are mine).

[25] *Jew. Ency., op. cit.*, 12.240.

[26] Fletcher, *op. cit.*, p. 52. Tremellius taught Hebrew not only at Cambridge but at Strasburg, Heidelberg, and the College of Sedan.

[27] M. J. Wallace, *The Life of Sir Philip Sidney*, Cambridge, 1915, pp. 202-3.

[28] *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 14.292-3. His works were edited in three volumes, Paris, 1578; Venice, 1591 and 1601. I have been unable to find an original edition of his works. Quotations from Steuchus derive from Franciscus Gomarus, *Davidis Lyra* . . . Lugduni Batavorum, 1637, in *Thesaurus Antiquitatum Sacrarum* . . . . ed. Blasius Ugolinus, *Opera*, v. 31, Venice, 1766.

[29] *Jew. Ency., op. cit.*, 6.125. It had appeared, earlier, in Constantinople about 1520. I have not seen a sixteenth century edition but have examined the (Roedelheim), Heidenheim-Baschwitz edition, 1806, printed with the *Marpe Lashon*.

no direct documentary debt of Sidney to Steuchus and, hence, to Ibn Chabib, it is not impossible that an accentual tradition stemmed from Ibn Chabib, the Italian resident in the early sixteenth century; to Tremellius, the Italian Jew, who had become a Catholic, in 1540, during the lifetime of Steuchus; [30] to Steuchus, the Catholic scholar; and from Tremellius and Steuchus to Sidney. Sidney's direct debt to Tremellius has been shown. His acquaintance with Steuchus is circumstantially probable: he was a friend of notable scholar-printers of Europe;[31] his circle of acquaintances included antiquarians, divines, theological controversialists, and Archbishop Parker, leading spirit of the Bishops' translation, had been a close friend of his father; [32] he was in France during the publication of Steuchus' works. Even at the Universities, the young Sidney had had opportunities to learn about currents of biblical scholarship: during his residence at Oxford,[33] there existed a Professorship of Hebrew; [34] at Cambridge—which he probably attended sometime between 1570-72 [35]—he could have found a special incentive, for the distinguished Tremellius tradition was being carried on, from 1569 to 1572, presumably, by Tremellius' son-in-law, Antoine Chevalier, not only a Hebraist of international repute but a famous French Protestant refugee, as well.[36] It is even conceivable that Sidney's interest in the accentual Hebrew versification may account, in part, for his metrical translation of 40-odd Psalms—as a demonstration to "quantitative" translators like Stanyhurst that accentual English verse was the English counterpart of Hebrew verse and, hence, the proper medium for translating biblical poetry.[37]

[30] *Ibid.*, 12.240.

[31] Wallace, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-26.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 98; pp. 101-3; pp. 109-10; p. 149.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 88 and p. 105.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 100.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 88; p. 105; p. 107.

[36] *DNB*, 4.125; Daiches, *op. cit.*, pp. 144-5; J. B. Mullinger, *The University of Cambridge from the Royal Injunctions of 1535 . . . to . . . Charles I*, Cambridge, 1884, pp. 416-17; *La Grande Encyclopedie*, 10.1145.

[37] On another occasion, I wish to explore the possibility that Sidney's reason for rendering the Psalms into verse was not simply to console his depression or banishment (Mona Wilson, *Sir Philip Sidney*, Oxford, 1931) or to correct the current crop of poor translations (Wallace, *op. cit.*) or to satisfy his pleasure at the close contemplation of the Psalms (C. H. Warren, *Sir Philip Sidney . . .*, London and New York, 1936). It may be that, having completed his experimentation with

However vague Sidney's relationship to Steuchus, the interpretation of the Italian scholar is clearly non-quantitative, "rhythmical" as opposed to "metrical," and inferentially accentual. Gomarus informs us that Steuchus, on the authority of Rabbi Ibn Chabib, anticipates other critics of biblical prosody:

> And those people [more recent scholars] the learned man Augustinus Steuchus, Bishop of Eugubinus, appears to anticipate [following Rabbi Moses ben Chabib in his book *Darke No'Am*, or *Prosody*], when, in his preface to the Psalms, he says as follows: *Moses, the most ancient of all, sang a song to God*; but that true poems, bound by metrical laws, are to be found in Holy Scriptures he hardly admits. For a little later he explains his opinion more fully. *Hebrew poetry, however, is not the same as that of the Greeks and the Latins: as neither the Italian, nor the Etruscan is the same as the Latin. Hebrew is similar to the Italian, rather than to the Latin. The Latin, imitating the Greek, observes the quantity of the syllables; the Hebrew does not observe the quantity, but only the number and the likeness of the ends of the syllables* [i. e., rhyme]. *As there is no spondee, trochee or dactyl in Italian poetry, but only the number of the syllables and the observance of the similarity of endings,* [so] *the Hebrew follows more or less the same pattern. Wherefore when Jerome writes either that Job or that the Psalms run in dactyl and spondee and says in the preface to Job that it glides along in verse; and when Augustine, with others, testifies about the poems of the Hebrews, you should know that it is not precisely the same feet and the same poetry that is indicated by them, but something similar. Consequently, neither "heroicum carmen"* [the classical hexameter] *exists among the Hebrews, nor the* [classical] *iambic and other kinds, but something like them and such as the foreigners* [non-Grecian and non-Roman] *sing in various rites. The Psalms, Job, the books of Solomon and the Prophets have obviously a kind of poetry, but it is not of the Latin and the Greek kind. It has a certain numerosity, and it differs a little from prose by the kind of words and poetic figures. . . .*[38]

English quantitative versification and having found native English versification as "sweet and majestic" as classical measures, yet degraded by its current trivial amoristic use, Sidney wished to exemplify by a creative imitation of Hebrew poetry —the "greatest in antiquitie and excellencie"—the proper moral use of native English versification, its aesthetic qualities, and its special propriety, as the English equivalent of the Hebrew form, for translating Hebrew poetry. The accurate dating of these Psalms may help date Sidney's conversion to a respect for English versification.

[38] Augustinus Steuchus in Gomarus, *op. cit.*, p. DCXV: Quibus praeire videtur vir doctissimus Augustinus Steuchus episcopus Eugubinus [Rabbi Mosche ben Chabib in Libro דרכי נעם seu prosodiae secutus] quum sua praefatione in Psalmo

This is an unqualified rejection of the classical tradition. Moreover, it seems to distinguish the "numbers" of Hebrew from the "metre" of the Greeks and Romans. Hebrew poetry does not observe the quantity (Hebraicum nulla tempora) but only the *number* of the syllables (sed numerum duntaxat . . . syllabarum); and it rhymes. It has a certain rhythm, or "numerosity," (numerosum quiddam). This and the whole context suggest that "number" (numerus) is distinguished from "quantity" (tempora) in that it does not observe the internal time of the feet; it merely observes the same number of syllables as does the classical dactyl or spondee or trochee or the classical hexameter line. This distinction, as we shall see in a moment, is amplified and clarified by Scaliger and by Vossius, both of whom, moreover, clearly, equate "numerus" with "rythmus." Thus, Steuchus, influenced by Ibn Chabib —who was obviously including post-biblical accented, rhymed, Hebrew verse [39]—identifies biblical Hebrew verse with the accented, rhymed, numbered, venacular verse of the Renaissance. With Tremellius, he represents, in sixteenth century continental scholarship, a new orientation toward biblical verse.

The next century reveals a continuation and an amplification of this point of view. In the first decade of the seventeenth century, less than thirty years after the publication of Steuchus' works in France, a great scholar of the French Renaissance, J. J. Scaliger, scornfully attacked the quantitative tradition,

ait quidem; *Moses omnium vetustissimus carmen Deo cecinit*: sed vera carmina, seu metricis legibus devincta, in S. literis extare, minime agnoscit. Sic enim paulo post, mentem suam plenius exponit. *Carmen autem Hebraicum non idem est atque Graecorum Latinorumque: ut neque Italicum, sive Etruscum, idem atque Latinum. Ac potius cum Italico, quam cum Latino similitudinem habet Hebraicum. Latinum, ad imitationem Graeci, tempora syllabarum observat: Hebraicum nulla tempora; sed numerum duntaxat atque similitudinem cadentium syllabarum. Ut non est in Italico carmine spondeus, trocheus, dactylus, sed numeratio tantum syllabarum, & observatio ut similiter desinant: simile quiddam sequitur Hebraicum. Quare quum Hieronymus scribit, aut Job aut Psalmos, dactylo spondeoque decurrere: & quum in praefatione de Job dicit: versu labitur: quaeque Augustinus cum caeteris, de carminibus Hebraeorum testantur, noveris non ipsos praecise pedes nostrumque carmen ab eis, sed simile quiddam designari. Itaque neque Heroicum carmen apud Hebraeos extat, neque jambicum aliaque genera, sed simile quiddam, & quale barbari diversis ritibus canunt. Psalmi, Job, libri Salomonis & Prophetarum, rationem carminis prae se ferunt, sed neque Latini, neque Graeci. Numerosum quiddam, & ab oratione soluta parumper recedens sermonis genere figurisque poeticis.* . . . The square brackets about Rabbi ben Chabib belong to Gomarus' text.

[39] Cf. text to note 8.

and on the authority of Augustine and Bede, illuminated the differentia between "rhythmical," or "numbered," verse and "metrical," or quantitative, verse—with special application to Scripture. Scaliger's scholarly authority undoubtedly helped arrest the development of the anti-classical point of view and stimulated the growth of the accentual interpretation. Though he does not use the word "accent," Vossius, who virtually echoes him and actually cites his treatise, does use this word; obviously, with quantity absent, the numbered syllables inevitably follow some principle of stress. Denying, as Jerome had affirmed, that the prophets, the *Psalms*, and *Lamentations* were composed in verse, Scaliger finds that verse exists only in the latter Song of Moses, the *Proverbs*, and most of *Job*. They are not, however, "metrical," but "rhythmical"; like the "Politici" of the later Greeks, which are "rhythmical"—that is, based upon the number of the syllables and not upon their quantity—*Job* and *Proverbs* and, by clear inference, the *Song of Deuteronomy*, with occasional deviations from the norm, are the equivalent of two iambic dimeters. Clarification of "Politici," as applied to these poems, will be reserved for a consideration of the criticism of Vossius, who follows Scaliger very closely.

In 1606, quoting from and commenting upon Jerome's "Denique quid Psalterio canorius, quod in morem nostri Flacci, et Graeci Pindari, nunc iambo currit, nunc Alcaico personat, nunc Sapphico tumet?," [40] Scaliger excoriates Jerome and the Hieronymic tradition thus:

> Perhaps those who have never read Pindar or do not know what Iambic, Alcaic, or Sapphic metre is, will think that the poetry of Pindar runs in Iambic and Alcaic or in Sapphic metre. You may read the same in the Preface to Job [of Jerome] also.[41] Concerning the Psalter, I wonder more [about the imputation of classical quantity] because neither in this nor in *Lamentations* is there any poem [at all] confined by laws of metre, but it is merely prose, animated by a poetic spirit. Furthermore, the prose of Isaiah and of other prophets, virtually poetry, is sometimes figurative; you could not

[40] Cf. Jerome, "Praefatio in Librum II Chronicorum Eusebii," *Patr. Lat., op. cit.*, 22. 442. 3. Jerome also included Moses' song (probably the latter one) in *Deuteronomy*, a song in *Isaiah*, and *Job*.

[41] Cf. Jerome, "In Librum Job (Praefatio)," *Patr. Lat., op. cit.*, 20. 1082. This passage includes Scaliger's succeeding references to the verse of the *Psalms* and *Lamentations*.

rightly, however, on that account, call it poetry. Only the Song of Moses at the end of *Deuteronomy*, the Proverbs of Solomon, and almost the whole book of *Job* are held together by a certain bond of *rhythm* which is the equivalent of two iambic dimeters and falls upon the ears with a ring. Sometimes, however, they are of fewer, sometimes of more syllables, like the catalectic, the brachycatalectic, and the hypermetric verses, and so forth, of the Greeks: *not by any means that compensation is made in accordance with the principle of quantitative equivalence, as is usual in Greek verse, for this cannot be expressed in the Hebrew tongue*; but depending upon the requirements of the thought, the *rhythm* is now longer, now shorter. For as the very learned Bede gathered from the writings of Augustine and others, *rhythm* is a " patterned grouping of words, very similar to metre, accommodated to the judgment of the ear, *not on metrical principle*, but through the *number* of the syllables, as are," says he, " the songs of the vernacular poets. And to be sure, *rhythm can exist without metre*, but metre cannot exist without rhythm." Again Bede to the same effect, following the same Augustine, unless I am mistaken. " Metre is the principle [of quantity] within a pattern. Rhythm is the pattern without the principle [of quantity]. Usually, however, by chance, so to speak, you will find in rhythm the principle [of quantity] also, not observed by the application of an artistic device, but as a result of the sound and the pattern itself; this [effect] the vernacular poets necessarily achieve in a rustic [that is, natural, or untutored], the learned poets, in a learned way, etc." These are the words of that man who explained what rhythm is better than any of the ancients. But see further in Augustine, Book III, on Music. And so the " political verses " of the Greeks, which are *based on the number of syllables*, not the *principle of quantity*, are nothing else but *rhythm*. In this way, the Book of Job, the Proverbs of Solomon are merely rhythm, not a metrical pattern; and in these, and that is true usually, the verses are two iambic dimeters, sometimes three dipodies, and sometimes there is a strange unevenness so that they follow the laws not even of rhythm. For . . . no one can make it possible to conceive of any kind of *metre* in the Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, and Abyssinian tongues, because the nature of the language does not permit it.[42]

[42] J. J. Scaliger, " In Prologum Hieronymi," *Animadversiones in Chronologica Eusebii, in Thesaurus Temporum* . . . Lugduni Batavorum, 1606, pp. 6-7: (Italics in the translation are mine). Pindari poesim Iambico & Alcaico metro, aut Sapphico currere credent fortasse, qui nunquam Pindarum legerunt, aut nesciunt quid sit Iambicum, Alcaicum, Sapphicum metrum. Idem leges & in Praefatione in Iob. De Psalterio magis miror, quum neque in eo, neque in Threnis, ullum canticum sit metricis legibus adstrictum, sed mere soluta oratio sit, charactere poetico animata. Quin Isaiae & aliorum prophetarum oratio instar poeseos aliquando figurata est, quam tamen propterea poesim esse non recte dixeris. Solum conticum Mosis extremo Deuteronomio, Prouerbia Solomonis, & totus fere liber Iob quadam *rythmi* necessi-

The dichotomy between the rhythm of the Hebrews and the metre of the classical writers is absolute; but Scaliger is somewhat unjust to Jerome, whose "In Librum Job (Praefatio)," so caustically referred to, strongly modified (as we have observed) the quantitative principle, as applied to *Job*, by the assertion that its quantitative pattern is very loose,[43] and, that, occasionally, it ignores quantity altogether in favor of "numers, or "rhythm," [44] in the sense of Scaliger's own distinction in the Augustinian-Bedic tradition. Moreover, Jerome had not included all of *Isaiah* as metrical, but merely a song of Isaiah, in a passage which Scaliger does not bother to quote: "Quid Deuteronomii et Isaiae cantico pulchrius?" [45] Possibly, too, Scaliger's discovery of two rhythmical iambic dimeters in the "Song of Deuteronomy" and *Proverbs* and part of *Job*, was influenced by Jerome's ascription of metrical iambic tetrameters to the same poems.[46] But Scaliger does break completely with Jerome and with Tremellius that *Psalms* and *Lamentations* are

tate cohibentur, *qui rythmus est* instar duarum dimetriarum Iambicarum, & tinnulus accidit ad aures. Sed aliquando pauciorum sunt syllabarum, aliquando plurium; quales Graecorum *στίχοι καταληκτικοὶ, βραχυκαταληκτικοὶ, ὑπερμετροὶ*, etc.: non utique quod compensatio fiat *κατὰ ἰσοχρονίαν* ut in Graecis solet: neque enim hoc exprimi potest idiomate Hebraico: sed quantum sententia postulat, rythmi nunc longior, nunc brevior est. Est enim rythmus, ut doctissimus Beda ex Augustini, & aliorum scriptis collegit, *metris consimilis verborum modulata compositio, non metrica ratione, sed numero syllabarum ad iudicium aurium examinata, ut sunt*, inquit, *carmina vulgarium poetarum. Et quidem rythmus sine metro esse potest, metrum vero sine rythmo esse non potest.* Rursus idem Beda ex eod. Augustino ni fallor. *Metrum est ratio cum modulatione. Rythmus modulatio sine ratione. Plerunque tamen casu quodam inuenies etiam rationem in rythmo non artifici moderatione seruatam, sed sono & ipsa modulatione ducente, quem vulgares Poetae necesse est faciant rustice, docti faciant docte etc.* Haec ille, quo nemo veterum melius quid sit Rythmus, explicauit. Sed amplius vide apud Augustinum lib. III de Musica. Itaque politici Graecorum, qui syllabarum numero, non temporum ratione constant, nihil aliud quam rythmus sunt. Sic liber Iob, Prouerbia Solomonis mere rythmus est, non metrica modulatio; in quibus et plurimum versus sunt duae dimetriae Iambicae, aliquando tres dipodiae, aliquando mira est inequalitas ut ne quidem rythmi legem sequantur. Nam ut in Hebraico, Syriaco, Arabico & Abbysinio idiomate ulla metri species concipi possit, nemo efficere possit, quia id natura sermonis non patitur.

[43] "In Librum Job (Praefatio)," *Patr. Lat., op. cit.*, 20.1082: Hexametri versus sunt, dactylo spondeoque currentes, et propter linguae idioma crebro recipientes et alios pedes non earundem syllabarum, sed eorundem temporum. Cf. note 19.

[44] *Ibid.*, cf. note 20 and text; cf. text to note 21.

[45] Jerome, "In Librum Job (Praefatio)," *op. cit.*, 28.1082.

[46] Jerome, "Epistola ad Paulam," *Patr. Lat., op. cit.*, 22.442.3. Cf. "The Hebrew Hexameter," *op. cit.*, pp. 68-9, note 9.

in verse,[47] as well as with Tremellius that the "Song of Deborah" and unidentified songs of *Isaiah*, *Hezekiah*[?], *Jeremiah*, *Habakkuk* are rhythmical: [48] only *Job*, *Proverbs*, and the "Song of Deuteronomy" are composed in verse; they *usually* follow two iambic dimeters, in a pattern that resembles quantitative verse *only in the equivalence in the number of syllables*, not in the principle of quantity; at times they may observe quantity by sheer chance; at times, they do not even adhere to the pattern of numbered syllables. At most, they are "rhythmical," not "metrical."

Scaliger's influence is direct and obvious upon another international scholar of the early seventeenth century—Gerhardt Johann Vossius (1577-1649). The Dutch scholar rejects *Psalms* and *Lamentations* in phrasing almost identical with Scaliger's:

> In the *Psalms* and *Lamentations*, not even rhythm is observed; the style is, on the contrary, prose which is animated by a poetic spirit and character.[49]

His distinction between rhythm and metre and his examples of rhythmical poetry are identical with Scaliger's—*Job*, *Proverbs*, and the "Song of Deuteronomy":

> . . . in *Job* and the *Proverbs* of Solomon there is only rhythm, but not metre: that is, the number of the syllables, not the quantity, is observed. The same applies to the latter song of Moses.[50]

He attacks the very passage which Scaliger had scored in "Praefatio in Librum II Chronicorum Eusebii," and, like

[47] Cf. note 24. Tremellius' third, or poetic division, of the Old Testament,—the "rhythmical," or "numbered," division—includes *Job*, *Psalms*, *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*, and *Song of Songs: Testamenti Veteris . . . op. cit.*, p. A3: Bibliorum Pars Tertia. Id est, Quinque Libri Poetici. Libri III tomi Iob, Psalmi, Proverbia, Ecclesiastes, Liber Canticorum.

[48] Cf. note 22. "Jechizkijae" may be a poor transliteration of "Ezekiel."

[49] Vossius, G. J., "De Artis Poeticae Natura, ac Constitutione Liber," XIII, 2, pp. 30-1, in *De Rhetorica, De Poetica, De Artium et Scientiarum Natura ac Constitutione, Opera*, Vol. 3, Amsterdam, 1695-1701, 7 vols.: At in psalmis ac threnis, ne rythmus quidem observatur: *sed oratio est soluta, quae spiritu ac charactere poetico animetur*. Cf. Scaliger's "De Psalterio magis miror quum neque in eo, neque in Threnis, ullum canticum sit metricis legibus adstrictum, sed mere *soluta oratio sit, charactere poetico animata*. Italics are mine.

[50] *Ibid* . . . in Iobo, & proverbiis Salomonis, solum rythmus est, non metrum: hoc est, syllabarum numerus, non quantitas, attenditur. Idem judicium est de posteriore Mosis cantico.

Scaliger, denies that Pindar had used the verses Jerome had ascribed to him in " In Librum Job (Praefatio) ":

> Jerome indeed says that the Psalter, in the manner of Pindar, runs now in Iambics, now rings with Alcaics, now swells with Sapphics. But he is wrong no less concerning Pindar than concerning the Psalter. For Pindar did not use those metres which Jerome has thought; nor are metres of this kind found.[51]

But whereas Scaliger—and Tremellius and Steuchus, as well—had left the principle of accent, as opposed to that of quantity, to the reader's inference, Vossius states explicitly that Hebrew verse is accentual. The very next sentence asserts:

> Certainly the Hebrews pay attention to nothing in their verses, except the number and the *accent* of the syllables.[52]

Unquestionably all this derives from Scaliger. Explaining the false construction placed upon biblical verse, Vossius continues by citing the French scholar:

> Occasionally . . . certain verses may seem to approach the metres of the Greeks and Latins. In this way, the latter song of Moses approaches either the hexameter, as Josephus, Origen, and Jerome have thought; or rather the tetrameter, which is the opinion of Joseph Scaliger in the *Animadvers. Euseb. in prologum Hieronymi.*[53]

But lest he be misinterpreted as associating Scaliger's tetrameter—two iambic dimeters—with the false quantitative theory, Vossius writes not only of the " Song of Deuteronomy," but of *Job* and *Proverbs,* where number, not quantity, was observed: [54]

> They seem to be trochaic tetrameter catalectic, if you count the syllables but disregard the quantity.[55]

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[51] *Ibid.*: Hieronymus quidem ait, *psalterium in morem Pindari nunc Iambico currere, nunc Alcaico personare, nunc Sapphico tumere.* Sed non minus de Pindaro, quam de psalterio, fallitur. Nec enim Pindarus iis utitur metris, quae Hieronymus putavit: nec ejusmodi metra inveniuntur. Cf. Scaliger notes 40, 41, 42.

[52] *Ibid.*: Nempe Hebraei in versibus nihil attendunt praeter syllabarum numerum & *accentum.* Italics are mine.

[53] *Ibid.*: . . . interdum quaedam accedere ad Graecorum, Latinorumque metra videantur. Quomodo canticum Mosis posterius vel ad hexametrum accedit, ut Josephus, Origenes, & Hieronymus, putarunt: vel potius tetrametrum, quae Josephi Scaligeri sententia est Animadvers. Euseb. in prologum Hieronymi.

[54] Cf. note 50.

[55] Vossius, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-1: Hi trochaici tetrametri catalecti videntur, si syllabas numeres, sed quantitas neglegitur.

And like Scaliger, he compares them with the " Politici ":

> And they are therefore like those verses of the Greeks which they call " Politici." [56]

Despite the similarities and the admitted critical debt, there appears to be a minor difference in the scansion of *Job*, *Proverbs*, and the " Song of Deuteronomy ": Scaliger speaks of a normal line the " equivalent of two iambic dimeters "; Vossius, of a line that " seems to be trochaic tetrameter catalectic." Patently, both are thinking, not of the modern monopodic iambic or trochaic foot, but of the ancient dipodic one: ⏑ – ⏑ – and – ⏑ – ⏑, respectively. This implication becomes certain from Scaliger's admission that there are " sometimes three dipodies " in *Proverbs* and *Job* and from Vossius' assertion that the " Song of Deuteronomy " " approaches *either the hexameter, . . . or, rather, the tetrameter.*" The ancient hexameter line varied from twelve to seventeen syllables; the ancient trochaic tetrameter catalectic, in dipodies, had fifteen syllables; the modern monopodic trochaic tetrameter catalectic has only seven syllables. Obviously, Vossius could not have seen sufficient similarity between the hexameter of twelve to seventeen syllables and the tetrameter catalectic of seven syllables to justify a comparison. The inference of *dipodic* tetrameters is supported by a typical line from the " Song of Deuteronomy," which, transliterated, shows the applicability of the dipodic fifteen-syllabled line and the insufficiency of the monopodic seven-syllabled one:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15
Ya-'a-rof kam-ma-ṭar lik-hi Tiz-al kaṭ-ṭal 'im-ra-ti.[57]

Vossius' line, then, has fifteen syllables; Scaliger's sixteen. Vossius' line, as we shall see, is the norm of the " Politici "; Scaliger's seems one foot too long. Yet the exposition of " Politici " in Du Cange strongly implies that Scaliger's qualification—" qui rythmus est *instar* duarum dimetriarum Iambicarum "—suggests, very loosely, the norm of the " Politici," or fifteen syllables. The divergence between Vossius' " trochaic "

[56] *Ibid.*, Similes igitur sunt versus, ac Graecorum illi, quos politicos vocant. Cf. Scaliger, note 42.

[57] *Deut.* 32: 2, a line which Wither uses to illustrate the accentual principle of biblical verse; cf. text to note 59.

and Scaliger's "iambic" is less significant than it appears. Essentially, they agree. Vossius, less critical than his predecessor, tries to *identify* the biblical verses with the "Politici"; Scaliger merely designates a very close resemblance.

Scaliger, it must be recalled, had told us that "Politici" were based on the "number" of syllables, not on their "quantity." Admitting the difficulty of determining the origin of the term "Politici versus," and explaining that their rhythm, like that of the dithyramb, is not rigid, Du Cange informs us that they are:

> . . . that kind of verse in which very many of the books of the later Greeks [were] composed. . . . They consist of a fixed number of syllables which scarecly exceeds fifteen, and frequent metaphors . . . as Martin Crusius observes in the Turcograecia, p. 193: *They consist of fifteen syllables, each in two iambic dimeter verses, the first Catalectic, the second Catalectic Anacreontic; they are reckoned by accent . . . rather than by quantity of syllables. . . .* But on this kind of verse one should listen especially to Leo Allatius in the Diatriba de Simeonum scriptis: *Versus politici*, he says, *usually consist of iambics and Anacreontics, but in such a way that the measure is not the quantity of the syllables which the ancients observed very accurately, but their number; and that the variations of accent are observed. . . . The same rule is followed in "politici," where they* [the verses] *never exceed fifteen syllables; and if any seem to go beyond that number, they shorten or diminish them by aphaeresis or synaloepha, as is observed especially in the current and vernacular speech of the Greeks, as in that of the Italians, too, among whom such hiatuses are restricted to the retention of the number of syllables. They are called "politici" because they are common to all and adapted to every person's use. . . . They are simple Trochees; for as these* [trochees] *consist of seven feet and a syllable, so do "Politici," except that such verses of the ancients sometimes exceed fifteen syllables by reason of longer feet; this never happens in "Politici," as has been said of Iambi. And as the lines of the ancients are constituted of two divisions and broken in the middle, so are these also which are called "Politici."* Thus far, this learned man.[58]

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[58] Du Cange, Charles Du Fresne, *Glossarium Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis . . . cum supplementis integris* D. P. Carpenterii, *Adelungii, aliorum, suisque digessit G. A. L. Henschel . . .*, Paris, 1937-8, 10 vols., 6. 395-6: . . . quo carminis genere conscripti complures . . . recentiorum Graecorum libri. . . . Syllabarum enim certo numero, qui vix ultra 15, excurrit, crebrisque metaphoris . . . constant . . . ut observat Martinus Crusius Turcograecia, pag. 193, *quindenis syllabis constant, ex 2. iambicis dimetris versiculis, priore Catalecto, posteriore Catalectico Anacreonteo; in quibus potius tonorum . . . quam quantitas syllabarum ratio habetur. . . .* Sed de hoc versuum genere audiendus in primis Leo Allatius in Diatriba de Simeonum scriptis: "*Versus,*"

This exposition clarifies and perhaps resolves the minor divergencies of Scaliger and Vossius about the reading of the normal verse lines of *Job*, *Proverbs*, and the "Song of Deuteronomy." It should be remembered that "Politici" do not have a regular internal pattern: Allatius notes that variations of accent are observed (declinationesque accentuum attendantur). Moreover, Scaliger does *not* mention that the biblical verses never exceed fifteen syllables, the maximum number for Politici"; sometimes he found three dipodies and sometimes lines of more or fewer syllables than rightly belong to two iambic dimeters; *usually* the verses are two iambic dimeters (plurimum versus sunt duae dimetriae Iambicae). Therefore, where Scaliger speaks of the "equivalent of two iambic dimeters" (instar duarum dimetriarum Iambicarum) he does not mean two pure iambic dimeters: Crusius tells us that the first member of the two dimeters is catalectic. Allatius implies that one of the dimeters is full ("Versus Politici usually consist of Iambics and Anacreontics," or trochees). Thus, one pure dimeter and one catalectic dimeter equal the fifteen syllables of the "Politici." This is the kind of combination that would make biblical verses seem like "Politici" to Scaliger.

As for Vossius' claim that the biblical poems are trochaic tetrameter catalectic, he is partly supported by Crusius, who calls the second member of the two dimeters "catalectic Anacreontic," that is, trochaic catalectic; it is fully supported by Allatius, who, even while describing "Politici" as composed of both "iambics and Anacreontics," or trochees, goes so far as to designate them as "simple Trochees" (meri Trochaici).

Seemingly, then, "Politici" were interpreted either as iambic

inquit, *Politici ut plurimum Iambicis et Anacreonticis constant: ita tamen ut nulla quantitatis syllabarum, quod accuratissime veteres observabant, ratio habeatur, tantum earum numerus, declinationesque accentuum attendantur. . . . Quod idem servatum est in "Politicis" in quibus syllabas quindecim nunquam excedunt; et si quae ultra videntur, eas per aphaeresin, sive synalephen decurtant et absumunt; quod magis in Graecorum recenti vulgatoque sermone, ut et in Italorum, apud quos similes hiatus ad numerum syllabarum retinendum restringuntur, conspicitur. Politici ideo dicti, quod communes omnium sunt, usuique eorum accommodati. . . . Meri Trochaici sunt: quemadmodum enim illi septem pedibus et syllaba constant, ita et hi: nisi quod antiquorum similes versus ratione pedum longiorum quindecim syllabas aliquando excedunt, "Politici" nunquam, ut de Iambicis dictum est. Et quemadmodum antiquorum duobus membris integrantur, mediique inciduntur, ita et hi qui nuncupantur Politici.* Hactenus vir doctissimus.

or trochaic, or as iambic and trochaic. Scaliger scanned the biblical poems, loosely, as iambic "Politici"; Vossius, strictly, as trochaic "Politici." Vossius identified them with the normal fifteen-syllabled line of the "Politici"; Scaliger, with a line approaching it. They concur, however, in the significant conviction that the poems are composed of non-quantitative, accented, dipodic tetrameters. This is a definitive, if bold, advance upon the broad accentual implications of Tremellius and even upon the clear, yet general affirmations of Steuchus, in the sixteenth century; for two Christian scholars of international eminence had proclaimed, not only (1) that biblical poetry was accentual, even though the syllabic count resembled that of the quantitative system; (2) but that it was generally tetrameter, dipodically, following a norm of fifteen syllables; (3) that it had many deviations, suggesting a vague apprehension of the "free" Hebrew accentual verse; (4) and that it broke into two divisions (Scaliger's "two iambic dimeters," and Vossius' "trochaici tetrametri catalecti," virtually echoing Allatius' "Trochees . . . of seven feet and a syllable" "in two divisions and broken in the middle"), suggesting a dim awareness of the principle of parallelism, which Bishop Lowth, in the eighteenth century, explained to the Western world as a basic principle of Hebrew prosody. This interpretation, though utterly incorrect in the details of scansion, is correct in principle of accent as opposed to quantity and looks, as in a glass darkly, toward the fundamental truth of *parallelismus membrorum* and to the generally accepted theory of a free accentual rhythm which considers only the syllables receiving the main accent and disregards the intervening ones. It frees itself of the shackles of the long patristic tradition and turns its face toward the light.

3

In seventeenth century England, as well as on the continent, the accentual orientation is reflected in the criticism of George Wither, thirteen years after the publication of Scaliger's treatise; by 1619, the problem of Hebrew prosody was so significant to this lyrist, pastoralist, and satirist, that he devoted a chapter to its consideration in his *A Preparation to the Psalter*. He has much in common with Scaliger and Vossius, but in many

ways he goes beyond them in insight, scholarly approach, and, it must be confessed, in creation of some things unknown which his Renaissance imagination bodied forth in the pursuit of truth. Throughout, however, he utterly disavows the quantitative tradition and espouses the cause of the " accentualists." The detailed examination of Wither must await a future study; a few excerpts suggesting the trend of his views must suffice, for the present:

. . . I doubt not that I may ghesse as neer the manner of their Verse, as those who haue fought for it by the Greeke or Latine rules. And I think it not unlikely, that the auncient Iewes had both such kinde of Verses, as some of ours are, and the same freedome in their Composures that we use; Yea, that they varied their Staffe at their pleasure, making it now longer, now shorter, as they listed, or best fitted the matter.

. . . They confesse, and our owne experience informeth us, that their Poems consist of diuers Numbers intermixt, sometimes equally, sometimes unequally, and oftentimes with Rymes in the periods of Sentences; not much unlike some of our English Numbers, which admitte not very naturally of such kindes of Verse as are usuall with the Latines; especially their dauncing Measures which are composed of Dactyls . . . there appeares sometimes to be a want, and sometime an Ouerplus, in the Syllables of their Verses . . . yet . . . there may bee somewhat to be obserued in the pronuntiation, will will both make the number of syllables equall, and the Ryme full . . . but this that followes, being a part of that excellent Song composed by the Prophet Moses, is to my understanding, in euery thing agreeable to that kind of Verse much in use at this day in our English Tongue. . . .

Iagharoph cammatar Likhi
Tezal cattal imrathi;
Ciseghhirim gnale-dheshe,
Vechirbibim gnale-gnesheb.[59]

which I haue translated into the same fashion of Verse.

Still, as deaw, my doctrine shall;
And, like raine, my speeches fall:
As small drops, upon the flowers;
Or, on grasse, the greater showres.[60]

This " same fashion of Verse," obviously, is the numbered,

[59] *Deut.* 32: 2. See note 57. Each two lines of the translation represent one line of the Hebrew; the whole passage represents two Hebrew lines.

[60] Wither, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-61.

accentual tetrameter—the same form ascribed to the same poem by Scaliger and Vossius; and the verse of these particular lines also falls into the category of the "Politici" of Scaliger and Vossius—an accentual line norm of about fifteen syllables, the first unit divided into eight and seven syllables, respectively, to each half-line, and the second unit divided into eight and eight, in the same pattern. The English translation shows, too, that the English poet viewed these Hebrew tetrameter lines, as Scaliger had viewed the whole poem, as divided into halves of approximately the same number of syllables—into two dimeters—but that, unlike his continental predecessor, and yet like Vossius, he scanned them as trochaic, not iambic. And, finally, if we cast a backward glance to the continent and to England, we observe that, like the sixteenth century Italian Steuchus and the Elizabethan author of "The Arte of English Poesie," he believed that Hebrew poetry rhymed.

It seems manifest, then, that Renaissance England, too, had entered the new current in the realm of biblical aesthetics; that it, too, was venturing its bark into the uncharted, mysterious sea of Hebrew prosody; that it, too, was questing eastward toward the vision of the dawn. What it found there through George Wither's criticism is the province of another investigation.[61]

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W. B. YEATS: A POET'S STAGECRAFT, 1899-1911

By Thomas Parkinson

> . . . I need a theatre; I believe myself to be a dramatist; I desire to show events and not merely tell them; and two of my best friends were won for me by my plays . . .
>
> W. B. Y., *Plays and Controversies*

1

From 1899 to 1911 Yeats became deeply absorbed in the affairs of the Irish National Theatre, and his personal experience at the Abbey [1] was so varied and even violent that its effect upon him was crucial and formative. His total devotion of time and effort to reading and producing plays, procuring and placating actors, raising and administering finances, facing angry audiences and dissatisfied patrons, certainly had an effect on his outlook and on his practice of his craft.[2] Of all the activities and relationships which probably had an important effect on the development of Yeats' sense of life and art, however, I should like to abstract and consider one: the fact that he wrote a play a year from 1899 to 1911 and revised each one assiduously after production. In moving from one poetic mode to another, from lyrics written mainly for the study to plays written primarily for the stage, Yeats was forced to cast away much that he had learned as a lyrist and bring into his art much that he had formerly rejected or not even considered.

[1] The Irish dramatic movement with which Yeats was associated did not become the Irish National Theatre Society until March 1903 and did not enter the Abbey Theatre until late in 1904. However, since the terms Irish Theatre and Abbey Theatre have become so tightly associated as to be interchangeable, I have used them in that manner. Moreover, Yeat's responsibilities with the Abbey were most exacting, and it was there that he displayed his talents as organizer and administrator to the best advantage.

[2] A note of a typical day in Dublin runs as follows: 'Breakfast 10.45; 11-1.10 reading script for the theatre and letters; 2.30-3.40 at the Abbey; 4-7 letters; evening Abbey.' Joseph Hone, *W. B. Yeats, 1865-1939* (New York, 1943), p. 241.

As he explored the new art he found that it asked new treatment of subject matter, that new treatment demanded a modulation of attitude as well as of linguistic technique. In his preface to *Poems 1899-1905* he explained his devotion to dramatic poetry in terms which express his own sense of the use of drama in his development:

> Some of my friends . . . do not understand why I have not been content with lyric writing. But one can only do what one wants to do, and to me drama—and I think it has been the same with other writers—has been the search for more of manful energy, more of cheerful acceptance of whatever rises out of the logic of events, and for clean outline, instead of those outlines of lyric poetry that are blurred with desire and vague regret.[3]

Clean outline of the objective world, manful energy in his *personae*, a sense of the logic of events, a cheerful acceptance of experience and action: these are not qualities which one associates with Yeats' early poems; and these qualities—so evident in the later verse—came into Yeats' poetry with his theatre experience.

In the theatre Yeats willingly underwent a discipline which changed his mode of rendering experience in almost every phase and in so doing sharpened and amplified his sense of life. Fresh qualities were infused in the poetry, and qualities before only potential were now actualized. Potentially Yeats had always been a poet of conflict; for while he had no really systematic view of life, he habitually saw the world as a scheme of continually opposing values. In his expository writings whenever he wrote the name of a concept its antithesis accompanied it immediately. Thus " reason " evoked " imagination," " descriptive landscape " called forth " vision," and so the contrasting pairs issued in neat order: abstraction-personality, observation-experience, allegory-symbolism, memory-inspiration, Nature-Art, criticism-revelation, knowledge-mystery, action-trance, idea-mood. This habit of thought was exhibited in his early poetry which had for its main matter the opposition of two worlds or schemes of value, the natural and supernatural, praising always the remote and vague, yearning for a life of dream, casual revery, and innocent inconsequential delight:

[3] *Poems 1899-1905*, p. xii.

Caolte tossing his burning hair
And Niamh calling *Away, come away*:
Empty your heart of its mortal dream.

Against the mortal world of reason, abstraction, observation, criticism, knowledge, action, and idea, Yeats affirmed the world of imagination, personality, unmotivated experience, revelation, trance, and mood. The texture of the early poetry is composed of language which does just that. It is mood, not idea, that forms the unifying principle of *Poems* in its various versions and of *The Wind Among the Reeds*. The wide suggestiveness of his symbols, the lulling rise and fall of the metrics, the recurrent theme and pattern of flight and longing—these deny by their very sensuous impact the value of objective observation, abstraction, and analysis. But at no point in the poems do the two worlds come into conflict which could strike dramatic sparks.

By its very nature dramatic poetry demands conflict, and through the demands of the theatre Yeats was forced to objectify the conflict which implicitly underlay the early poems. The true subject matter of Yeats' poetry was the duel between two sets of value, two ways of living; and it is illuminating that the major addition to *The Countess Cathleen* after the 1899 performance should have exploited the conflict between the world of imagination and the world of action.[4] Most simply stated, the major subject of Yeats' Abbey dramas was the conflict between the fixed palpable world of human affairs (Guaire, Conchubar) and the world of passion and aspiration which is beyond reason, system, or office (Seanchan, Cuchulain). The basic split in the plays is that between the institutional world, limited, tame, calculating, interested in the virtue of fixed character, and the personal world, exuberant, care-free, wild, affirming the values of intense personality.

As Yeats came to perceive more clearly both his subject matter and the demands of treatment made upon it by the Irish Theatre, as his dramatic practice revealed what his early lyric technique had not allowed him to explore, he developed a

[4] "After the performance in 1899 I added the love scene between Aleel and the Countess. . . ." A note in the 1912 edition of the play, Volume I of *Dublin Plays* (London, 1912), p. 113. The scene appears in *Collected Plays* (New York, 1934), pp. 25 ff.

theory of drama which expressed clearly his abiding convictions and guided him in the creation and revision of his plays. Basic to this theory was his notion of human character and personality.

In Yeats' view, the human mind was capable of two orders of experience, one peculiar to the individual, the other common to the race. In day to day urban life people lived the individual life of character; exalted out of ordinary circumstances, they lived the common life of passion. Character was the continually visible aspect, the distinctive attributes which mark off man from man: religion, nationality, class, profession, ways of walking, talking, and dressing. A " character " was to Yeats a humor figure, set apart from his fellow men by some extravagance of dress or speech.

Comedy treats " character " and originates in the peculiarities of human beings, their differentiation from one another:

> . . . tragedy must always be a drowning and breaking of the dykes that separate man from man, and . . . it is upon these dykes comedy keeps house.[5]

Since comedy is based on the separateness of individuals, it establishes a community with its audience by appeal to the circumstances of their daily experience; the ideal response to a comic figure would be to place him in the world of usual being and praise his inventor for having made a figure that one would know if one met him on the street. Hence it is the essence of comedy to individuate by scrutiny of surface characteristics.

Yet the peculiarities of dress, gesture, and speech do not exhaust the interest of a human being. There remains some hidden resource which comedy does not touch nor character include:

> . . . behind the momentary self, which acts and judges in the world, and is subject to the judgment of the world, there is that which cannot be called before any mortal judgment seat. . . .[6]

This is the common life of passion, which originates in that soul which is alike in all men. This soul, the *anima mundi*, is

[5] *Essays* (New York, 1924), p. 298.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 125.

the great source of inspired experience, and the passion which is its essence is also the essence of tragic action:

> Tragedy is passion alone, and rejecting character, it gets form from motives, from the wandering of passion. . . .[7]

Tragedy and comedy are alike only in that they are concerned with a moment of intense life. The dramatist abstracts an action from the welter of experience, purifies it, reduces it to as simple a form as is compatible with the demands of the theatre. In tragic art the passion, after being purified from all but itself, is ". . . aroused into a perfect intensity by opposition with some other passion, or it may be with the law. . . ."[8] Yeats' conception of tragedy does not admit the concept of waste or loss, for his sympathies are always with the passionate beings, not with the fixed and, he would say, impermanent structures of the state or church. Thus Coriolanus' pride is " noble " and Cleopatra's sensuality is proof that she had a soul which was " all flame " :

> If we were not certain of the law we would not feel the struggle, the drama, but the subject of art is not law, which is a kind of death, but the praise of life, and it has no commandments that are not positive.[9]

To Yeats tragic flaws are virtues.

Tragedy, then, is that art which affirms the value of passionate experience as manifested in the intense moment when character is shed and the hero transcends the limits of his merely individual mind and becomes the vehicle of an eternal state of the *anima mundi*. Tragedy utilizes the interplay of circumstance and character mainly as a means to an end, for it is concerned with matters vaster than any individual person, time, or place. Tragic figures go beyond the divisions established by the social world and in their moments of passion attain unity of being by overcoming the obstacles presented to them by the temporal world; they are

> . . . those men and women . . . who have made their death a ritual of passion; for what is passion but the straining of man's being against some obstacle that obstructs its unity? [10]

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[7] *Autobiography* (New York, 1938), p. 402.
[8] *Plays and Controversies* (New York, 1924), p. 105.
[9] *Loc. cit.*
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 209.

Thus in his definition of tragedy and comedy Yeats expressed his sense of the two orders of experience, the two aspects of the human mind (*anima hominis, anima mundi*), and provided a basis for his own treatment of those two orders. Yeats himself wrote both prose comedies and poetic tragedies for the Abbey audience, realizing that the appeal of a dramatist was based on more than one type of attainment:

> The play that is to give them a quite natural pleasure should tell them either of their own life, or of that life of poetry where every man can see his own image, because there alone does human nature escape from arbitrary conditions.[11]

He also mingled the two types, for while he made distinctions between tragedy and comedy for the purposes of discourse, his practice did not follow the lines of pure definition:

> We may not find either mood in its purity, but in mainly tragic art one distinguishes devices to exclude or lessen character, to diminish the power of that daily mood, to cheat or blind its too clear perception. If the real world is not altogether rejected, it is but touched here and there, and into the places we have left empty we summon rhythm, balance, pattern, images that remind us of vast passions. . . .[12]

Most dramatic art (including all of Shakespeare), according to Yeats, would be tragi-comedy. His own tragic plays derive form from the clash of motive and character, and retain a hold upon the real world by their mingling of prose and poetry, by the often conversational tone of the verse, the colloquial flavor of the diction.

In composing poetic drama for the Abbey, Yeats was primarily interested in the passionate moment which expressed the common life of man as manifest in one intense personality. The plays attained dramatic tension by dramatizing the struggle between two ways of life and thought, the one desiring order, stability, structure, the other standing for war, love, poetry, mystic revelation. His hero—warrior, lover, poet, mystic—would face his antagonist—king, mayor, philosopher, skeptic—in a struggle culminating in the moment when the hero would attain that passion which

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 32.
[12] *Essays*, p. 300.

. . . realizes, substantiates, attains, scorns, governs, and is most mighty when it passes from our sight.[13]

Although the passionate moment was the climax of the play, the great bulk of the action was to concern itself with more prosaic matters: the clash of motive and character, rendered in diction true to the natural movement of the speaking voice.

To achieve these ends it was necessary for Yeats to learn the rudiments of dramatic construction, and it was also urgent that he revise his poetic style radically. His rewriting of play after play during rehearsal and after performance slowly taught him the various methods of giving his actions a meaningful coherence and his speeches the authentic tone of individual human voices. The process of discovery which this entailed may seem to us—who do not have to go through it—the discovery of self-evident elementary truths. For Yeats, who came to the writing of poetic drama with a matured lyric style which was useless to him, which he had to cast away almost entirely, the discovery of his new needs and the creation of a new manner compelled the consideration of questions which must at first have seemed insoluble and which were always elemental in nature and importance.

2

Yeats learned the dramatic deficiences of his early verse through the direct instruction of experience, that is, through seeing his plays performed on the stage. As early as 1894 he haunted the theatre which produced *The Land of Heart's Desire*:

I came mainly to see how my own play went, and for the first fortnight to vex my most patient actors with new lines. . . .[14]

Helped by what he had learned from seeing *The Land of Heart's Desire* on the stage, Yeats also revised *The Countess Cathleen* for *Poems* 1895, and after the 1899 performance of *The Countess* revised the play yet again.[15] By 1906 Yeats was inured to the rewriting of plays after performance:

[13] *Autobiography*, p. 447.
[14] *Autobiography*, p. 240.
[15] The Huntington Library's unique copy of the 1899 edition of *Poems* contains the autograph revisions made by Yeats when he prepared the 1901 edition for press,

I have written a good many plays in verse and prose, and almost all those plays I have rewritten after performance, sometimes again and again, and every re-writing has been an addition to the masculine element, an increase of strength in the bony structure.[16]

Typical of his rewriting is *The Shadowy Waters*, which underwent the following process:

I published in 1902 a version of *The Shadowy Waters*, which, as I had no stage experience whatever, was unsuitable for stage representation, though it had some little success when played during my absence in America in 1904, with very unrealistic scenery before a very small audience of cultivated people. On my return I rewrote the play . . . but found it still too profuse in speech for stage representation. In 1906 I made a stage version, which was played in Dublin in that year.[17]

After 1906 Yeats continued tinkering with the play, and while it was not again produced on the Abbey stage, as a poem it has excited both admiration and controversy.[18]

The Shadowy Waters was first printed in 1900 (not 1902), after Yeats had worked on it for several years.[19] In a letter to Mr. Weygandt, Yeats said once that he had been "brooding over 'The Shadowy Waters'" since childhood, and when Weygandt asked "which writing of his he cared most for," Yeats answered, "That I was last working on, and then 'The Shadowy Waters.'" The play was evidently of prime importance to Yeats, for when he first met Lady Gregory he not only startled her by saying that about half the characters had eagles' faces but confessed to her that he had put "a great deal of himself into it."[20]

In its use of occult and Irish symbols and its general theme and movement the play participated in the qualities which

as well as the typescript of the new third act. The poem was revised yet again in 1911, and the history of these revisions, indeed the history of the play's genesis, development and productions is one of the most interesting and revealing processes in Yeats' art from 1889 to 1911.

[16] *Plays and Controversies*, p. 187.

[17] *Collected Poems* (New York, 1933), p. 456.

[18] Hone, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-7. A. E. Malone, *The Irish Drama* (London, 1929), p. 141.

[19] Hone, p. 41, p. 112.

[20] *Our Irish Theatre* (New York, 1913), p. 3. Mr. Weygandt's notes appear in his *Irish Plays and Playwrights* (Boston and New York, 1913), p. 57.

characterized Yeats' early verse from 1889 to 1901. The main facts of the play remained constant through the various versions, and Yeats' program note for the 1906 production describes the main symbols and the main action of the play with a gracious accuracy:

> Once upon a time, when herons built their nests in old men's beards, Forgael, a Sea-King of ancient Ireland, was promised by certain human-headed birds love of a supernatural intensity and happiness. These birds were the souls of the dead, and he followed them over seas toward the sunset where their final rest is. By means of a magic harp, he could call them about him when he would and listen to their speech. His friend Aibric, and the sailors of his ship, thought him mad, or that he and they were being lured to destruction. Presently they captured a ship, and found a beautiful woman upon it, and Forgael subdued her and his own rebellious sailors by the sound of his harp. The sailors fled upon the other ship, and Forgael and the woman drifted on alone following the birds, awaiting death and what comes after, or some mysterious transformation of the flesh, an embodiment of every lover's dream.[21]

To readers of Yeats' early verse the terms of the action are familiar: Forgael yearns for the impossible and gives up temporal life and its rewards for some experience of the unpeopled world beyond the sun. The immortals have pressed upon him, he commands magical power, and he longs for that mingling of the natural and supernatural which was one of Yeats' abiding preoccupations. Once more Yeats' poetic hero, singled out and perhaps victimized by the gods, fares over waters in search of happiness.

If the play is in many respects typical of Yeats' early verse, it also embraces all the elements necessary, in Yeats' definition, to tragic drama. Straining against the obstacle presented by the merely worldly aspirations of his sailors and the "beautiful woman," Forgael might well attain the moment of passionate intensity which would make him stand as a hero worthy of Yeats' affirmation. And the material seems to allow for continual conflict culminating in the final scene.

In the texture of its verse, however, the 1900 version lacked the subsidiary qualities which—Yeats' theatre experience would convince him—were necessary to conflict, to credibility, to

[21] *The Arrow*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Nov. 24, 1906). No pagination. This publication served as the program for Abbey productions.

audience acceptance. His characters spoke the language of his early poetry; their dialogues drifted into separate monologues, and their addresses to one another deviated into rhapsody and ecstasy. More damaging still was the vocabulary of the verse, the pre-Raphaelite diction infused with occult and Irish symbols esoteric and personal in their bearing:

> I began "The Shadowy Waters" when I was a boy, and when I published a version of it six or seven years ago, the plot had been so often re-arranged and was so overgrown with symbolical ideas that the poem was obscure and vague. It found its way upon the stage more or less by accident, for our people had taken it as an exercise in the speaking of verse, and it pleased a few friends, though it must have bewildered and bored the greater portion of the audience.[22]

The cause of bewilderment is most evident in the final action of the play. Forgael and Dectora have accepted, without any protracted struggle, their love for one another, and, as Dectora looks out over the waves, she is naively surprised to see a hound and deer scurrying toward the horizon:

> . . . O look!
> A red-eared hound follows a hornless deer.
> There! There! They have gone quickly, for already
> The cloudy waters and the glimmering winds
> Have covered them. . . .

When Forgael determines the exact point of their disappearance, he returns to the steering-oar and explicates:

> The pale hound and the deer wander for ever
> Among the winds and waters; and when they pass
> The mountain of the gods, the unappeasable gods
> Cover their faces with their hair and weep.

This evidently satisfies Dectora, for it surely silences her; but she has a right to be puzzled, as an audience certainly would be. What are these animals doing in the middle of the ocean? And it does not help us particularly to look up at the boat's sail and discover that it is decorated with three rows of hounds, "the first dark, the second red, and the third white with red ears. . . ." The images demand an elucidating context that the lines in which they appear do not provide.

[22] *Loc. cit.*

The same images occur in one poem in *The Wind Among the Reeds* and in that book Yeats included a note which supplies the context necessary for understanding the meaning of the imagery in both " Mongan Laments the Change that has Come upon Him and His Beloved " and *The Shadowy Waters*. The lines in the lyric are perhaps even more cryptic than the lines in the play:

> Do you not hear me calling, white deer with no horns!
> I have been changed to a hound with one red ear!

In the note to this poem Yeats adopts a rather testy tone:

> This hound and this deer seem plain images of the desire of man ' which is for the woman,' and ' the desire of the woman which is for the desire of the man,' and of all desires that are as these. I have read them this way in The Wanderings of Usheen, or Oisin, and have made my lover sigh because he has seen in their faces ' the immortal desire of immortals.' [23]

With this knowledge we could place the images in their context and conclude that the hound and deer symbolize the future fate of Dectora and Forgael, their wandering, the impossibility that any love—human or divine—could ever find satisfaction.

The passage expresses the theme of the play; it comes at a crucial point in the action: and if we are baffled without notes from another volume, the passage would bewilder an auditor entirely. The hound and deer are both obscure and oblique in bearing, and they move through " cloudy waters and glimmering winds "; an interchange of epithets calculated to condense wind and water to a single wavering insubstantial mist. The image has none of the " clean outline " that Yeats was to seek in his practical writing for the theatre but suggests mood through a deliberate confusion of imagery. Throughout the 1900 version this impulse toward moody atmospheric language combines with an equally strong impulse toward symbols personal or esoteric in importance to form a verse of lovely vagueness and dramatic impropriety.

The language of *The Shadowy Waters* is not different in any important respect from that of *The Wind Among the Reeds* or *Poems* 1901. It is saturated with metaphors fetched from The

[23] *The Wind Among the Reeds* (New York, 1899), pp. 92-93.

Order of the Golden Dawn and The Celtic Twilight, conveying a tone and mood which Yeats, only a few years later, was to object to heartily:

> Modern literature, above all poetical literature, is monotonous in its structure and effeminate in its continual insistence upon certain moments of strained lyricism.[24]

The uniformity of texture in *The Shadowy Waters*, the dreaminess unbroken—whether Forgael, Dectora, or a sailor speaks—by any touch of the colloquial or any individual urge in the characters, is melancholy, monotonous, and lyric in the sense that " The Indian to his Love " is lyric:

> William Morris, who did more than any modern to recover medieval art, did not in his *Earthly Paradise* copy from Chaucer, from whom he copies so much that was *naive* and beautiful, what seems to me essential in Chaucer's art. He thought of himself as writing for the reader, who could return to him again and again when the chosen mood had come, and became monotonous, melancholy, too continually lyric in his understanding of emotion and of life.[25]

A monotonous texture forbids dramatic variety. Without a variety of tone and idiom it is impossible to present various personalities and points of view. Under the critical eye of an average audience, Morris and Yeats would be driven to explore the entire range of their potential sympathies:

> Had he accustomed himself to read out his poems upon those Sunday evenings that he gave to Socialist speeeches, and to gather an audience of average men, precisely such an audience as I have often seen in his house, he would have been forced to Chaucer's variety, to his delight in the height and depth, and would have found expression for that humorous, many-sided nature of his.[26]

If spoken aloud, the verse of *The Shadowy Waters* with its crowded obscure imagery would grow cumulatively perplexing and set any but the most friendly audience in a state of querulous bewilderment:

> I owe to him many truths, but I would add to those truths the certainty that all the old writers, the masculine writers of the world, wrote to be spoken or to be sung, and in a later age to be read aloud,

[24] *Plays and Controversies*, p. 187.
[25] *Loc. cit.*
[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 187-188.

for hearers who had to understand swiftly or not at all, and who gave up nothing of life to listen, but sat, the day's work over, friend by friend, lover by lover.[27]

If Yeats was to write for "hearers who had to understand swiftly or not at all," he could not continue writing in the mode of his early lyrics. We forgive, on first reading a short lyric, so long as the poetic thread is clear to us through the title or the general idea and movement of the poem; we make a mild act of charity until the scheme of the poem is known, the poem ends, and we can return to the beginning in order to read at yet another level, correcting and elaborating our first incomplete understanding of the lyric. But the players, when their words raise a question, cannot stay for an answer; they must go on and leave us, if the verse remains complex or esoteric, confused and ultimately indifferent or angry. T. S. Eliot thinks that the most important cause of improvement in Yeats' dramatic verse is ". . . the gradual purging out of poetic ornament." Certainly it was necessary, if Yeats was to write successfully for a lively critical audience, to purge his verse of the very qualities which gave his early lyrics a substantial charm:

> The course of improvement is towards a greater and greater starkness. The beautiful line for its own sake is a luxury dangerous even for the poet who has made himself a virtuoso of the theater. What is necessary is a beauty which shall not be in the line or the isolable passage, but woven into the dramatic texture itself; so that you can hardly say whether the lines give grandeur to the drama, or whether it is the drama which turns the words into poetry.[28]

Because Yeats was still striving for the effect of his early lyrics, the 1900 version of *The Shadowy Waters* lacked the sharp conflict so essential to dramatic force. The very tone and texture of the poetry do not admit the importance of anything but Forgael's aspirations and shun the claim of any other point of view, Aibric's, Dectora's or the sailors', so that when Forgael's antagonists speak they are seriously handicapped by having to speak in Forgael's language:

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 188.

[28] "The Poetry of W. B. Yeats," *Southern Review*: "The William Butler Yeats Memorial Issue," VII (1941), 451.

. . . I followed him
And heard the music in the wind, and saw
A red hound running from a silver arrow.
I drew my sword to fling it in a pool—
I have forgotten wherefore.

The common sailors speak in the same languid tones that characterize Forgael.

The poetic language which Yeats had found appropriate to his early poetic stance as a young man grieved by a world of science and unobliging women was a serious handicap to his dramatic ambitions. If his dramatic verse was to treat conflict —as it had to—he would have to extend his language so that it could persuasively present a point of view opposing that of his early verse. Moreover, an audience that had to understand swiftly or not at all put its weight against a dense texture of metaphor and in favor of a language more simple, closer to common speech.

On Yeats' return from America in 1904 the Abbey players gave a private performance of the play for his benefit; he then turned it over to Florence Farr who presented it at a Theosophical Convention.[29] Yeats attended this presentation also and with it fresh in mind went about the task of making the play stageable. In his letters to Florence Farr his first mention of the rewriting records his primary objection to the play in its 1900 version:

> I am at work on *Shadowy Waters* changing it greatly, getting rid of needless symbols, making the people answer each other, and making the ground work simple and intelligible. I find I am enriching the poetry and the character of Forgael greatly in the process.[30]

As Yeats now saw the play, it needed radical change: it is probable that very few dramatists have had to revise a play after production so that the people will talk to each other. But most important from Yeats' own point of view was the enlightening discovery that drama and poetry were not mutually exclusive modes of aesthetic being.

[29] *Plays for an Irish Theatre* (1911), p. 222.

[30] *Florence Farr, Bernard Shaw, W. B. Yeats: Letters* (London, 1942), p. 54. I follow in all quotations the spelling and punctuation of the text, which follows Yeats' own errors and quirks.

Hence he willingly and excitedly made profound changes in the play. He revised the entire concluding scene and both clarified and subtilized the motives at work in Forgael, Dectora, and Aibric. Indeed he changed the play on almost every page, making Forgael's part clear and straightforward, reducing the symbols to the minimum:

> There are no symbols except Aengus and Aedaus and the birds—and I have into the bargain heightened all the moments of dramatic crisis—sharpening every knife edge. The play as it was, came into existence after years of strained emotion, of living upon tip-toe, and it is only right in its highest moments—the logic and circumstances are all wrong. I am going to make some fine sharp verses for Forgael when he enchants Dectora and I have done a bit where he sees her shadow and finds that she is mortal.[31]

At last, with logic freshly introduced, a suggestion of circumstantial detail inserted where almost none had been in the 1900 version, with the conflict of motive and character increased, the symbolism pruned and the dialogue made both more colloquial and more fitting to the individual characters, Yeats could look on the newly arising structure and brag to Miss Farr that ". . . Shadowy Waters is getting gradually finished—doubled in beauty." [32]

From the second version of *The Shadowy Waters* Yeats learned a great deal. He learned to establish clearer distinctions between characters, to place his action in more credible circumstances, and to explore more fully the logic of theme and relationship. He also learned to employ a more inclusive vocabulary; he learned, in short, to treat a more varied range of matter in a more supple technique.

The first noticeable change in the play concerns the sailors, who become the type of the man who is interested in experience only as a means to an end, who looks on piracy not as an activity good in itself—as the sailors of the first version did—but as a means of obtaining women and booty. One sailor expresses his wish for security in a language closer to the quality of his mind than that he spoke in 1900:

> . . . I had thought to make
> A good round sum upon this cruise, and turn—

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 60.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 62.

For I am getting on in life—to something
That has less ups and downs than robbery.

In 1900 the sailors had a more romantic conception of piracy:

I swore but yesterday if the Red God
Would end this peaceful life that rots the bones,
None should escape my sword: I would send all
To mind his cows and swine by the Red Lake.

The repetition of " Red," the insistence on sensual quality that also suggests evaluation, was deleted in the 1905 version, and the attitude of adherence to a life of pillage was qualified:

I am so lecherous with abstinence
I'd give the profit of nine voyages
For that red Moll that had but the one eye.

The sailors of 1906 are ordinary men with a normal endowment of sensuality. Yeats turns these ordinary men to account and uses them to vouch for the authenticity of Forgael's visions; they too have seen both the magical birds which guide Forgael and the figures of Aengus and Edain. Indeed, the one made lecherous with abstinence has gone so far as to try embracing the shade of Edain.

They are sensual men with a common sense view of life. Their common sense guides them to try getting Aibric to side with them when they plot against Forgael, for they are simple men who know nothing about navigation. By making them the type of the ordinary man, by distinguishing their speech and interests from those of Aibric and Forgael, Yeats establishes the circumstances which make Forgael's dream appear less vague and false: for if the sailors have seen magical birds and gods, they may truly exist.

Aibric in 1900 was a king in his own right who had followed Forgael with twenty galleys; no explanation is given of the fate of this considerable fleet, and evidently he still follows Forgael, without any resentment, out of pure affection. In 1905 Aibric was also made into a type, the loyal retainer, the older man more experienced in the ways of the world, who attempts to argue Forgael out of his impossible adventure. His jealousy of Dectora also established a secondary conflict in the play and one of the more satisfactory of the newly interpolated scenes occurs when he accuses her of luring Forgael to his death.

The major characters—Forgael and Dectora—are more finely developed than before. Forgael especially is more fully presented because his conflicts with Aibric, Dectora, and himself are heightened considerably, and as his action becomes more human and credible, the symbolism of his language contracts and almost disappears, or is placed in an elucidating context. He sounds less like an initiate into the inner circles of The Order of the Golden Dawn and more like a pirate-king who has some interest in mystic philosophy; although he is overcome by his vision of Aengus and Edain he has neither the belief or knowledge in occult matters that he had in 1900.

When Forgael speaks, he argues, that is, he speaks to be understood. His line of argument is clear, controlled by guiding concepts, even a little repetitious in the interests of communicating with his skeptical listeners. The new simplicity of idiom and homeliness of metaphor are evident in the freshly interpolated argument between Forgael and Aibric. Aibric points out that when a man dreams that he has spent all night in the hills with the ever-living, he must face the irreverence of one potent witness:

> . . . His wife knows better.
> Has she not seen him lying like a log,
> Or fumbling in a dream about the house?
> And if she heard him mutter of wild riders,
> She knows that it was but the cart-horse coughing
> That set him to the fancy.

Forgael answers this domestic scene with an argument philosophical in language yet plain and clear. In casting his weight in the balance for dreams he develops a topic statement, addressing Aibric the while, attempting to win him at the close by reminding him of their comradeship, perhaps even clapping his " Fellow-wanderer " on the shoulder:

> . . . All would be well
> Could we but mix ourselves into a dream,
> And get into their world that to the sense
> Is shadow, and not linger wretchedly
> Among substantial things; for it is dreams
> That lift us to the flowing, changing world
> That the heart longs for. What is love itself,
> Even though it be the lightest of light love,

But dreams that hurry from beyond the world
To make low laughter more than meat and drink,
Though it but set us sighing. Fellow-wanderer,
Could we but mix ourselves into a dream,
Not in its image in the mirror. . . .

Forgael and Aibric speak distinctive languages: Aibric's is homely, blunt, direct, in its movement and imagery; Forgael's is philosophic in an elementary way (sense, shadow, substantial), exalted in its lift and beat, vague at times yet always uniquely his and far easier to follow, with its four-times-repeated "dream," than was his earlier language. Even if one missed the continuous sense of the passage, on hearing it spoken by an accomplished reader of verse, it would still be evident that Forgael was talking about dreams and that he approved of them.

Forgael's speech in made simpler and plainer throughout the play, and his behaviour more complex and human, less dominated by a single motive. He wants Aibric to understand his venture if not to approve of it, and when he finally charms Dectora with his magical harp, he succumbs to the quite human regret that he did not woo and win her by fair devices. This new motive brings Forgael to earth or at least to shipboard and establishes a new conflict, within Forgael, that heightens the action and gives both Forgael and Dectora more human character. After charming Dectora, Forgael wishes to confess all:

. . . I have done so great a wrong against you,
There is no measure that it would not burst.
I will confess it all. . . .

Dectora will not listen:

. . . What do I care,
Now that my body has begun to dream,
And you have grown to be a burning sod
In the imagination and intellect?
If something that's most fabulous were true—
If you had taken me by magic spells,
And killed a lover or husband at my feet—
I would not let you speak, for I would know
That it was yesterday and not to-day
I loved him; I would cover up my ears,
As I am doing now. . . .

Forgael, of course, really has taken her by magic spells and been the cause of her husband's death at her feet, but only in the second version does Yeats see and exploit the dramatic possibilities of the situation. Simple as this dramatic irony is, the realization of it came to Yeats only as his original ambition —to write verse of a certain texture and tone—gave way to another aim: to write dramatic verse suitable to the stage.

In structure, then, and in texture the play in its second version suffered basic change. Perhaps the most important reason for this change was Yeats' newly derived knowledge that language became beautiful by becoming appropriate:

> Sainte-Beuve has said that there is nothing immortal in literature except the style, and it is precisely this sense of style, once common among us, that is hardest to recover. I do not mean by style words with an air of literature about them, what is ordinarily called eloquent writing. The speeches of Falstaff are as perfect in their style as the soliloquies of Hamlet. One must be able to make a king of faery or an old countryman or a modern lover speak the language which is his and nobody else's, and speak it with so much of emotional subtlety that the hearer may find it hard to know whether it is the thought or the word that has moved him, or whether these could be separated at all.[33]

In 1901 Yeats had written with evident satisfaction that his style was himself but two years later he was writing of the difficulty of developing a " sense of style " which would allow the treatment of human thought and feeling ranging the gamut from Hamlet to Falstaff. Once his aim had been to communicate only his own sense of significant experience. This was still his aim, to dramatize his view of life, but he must be able to speak a more various language, capable of expressing a point of view antagonistic to his own and so modulating his own point of view that it would sound credible from the lips of Forgael, Cuchulain, or Naisi.

The difference between the first and second versions will serve to symbolize the change in Yeats' poetry forced by his development of his " style " in accord with theatrical demands. As we have seen, he was forced to exploit through a clearer delineation of dramatic structure the basic theme and conflict of his life and art, that between *anima hominis* and *anima*

[33] *Plays and Controversies*, p. 46.

mundi. He clarified and strengthened his sense of character, he contracted his vocabulary to exclude his most esoteric symbolism, and he expanded his vocabulary to include more common language and provide an elucidating context for those symbols which he retained. He tuned his verse to suit the actual mind and voice of a distinctive living man:

> I can see nothing plain; all's mystery.
> Yet, sometimes there's a torch inside my head
> That makes all clear, but when the light is gone
> I have but images, analogies,
> The mystic bread, the sacramental wine,
> The red rose where the two shafts of the cross,
> Body and soul, waking and sleep, death, life,
> Whatever meaning ancient allegorists
> Have settled on, are mixed into one joy.
> For what's the rose but that? miraculous cries,
> Old stories about mystic marriages,
> Impossible truths? But when the torch is lit
> All that is impossible is certain,
> I plunge in the abyss.

We have here the hesitancies, the doubts, of Forgael's mind, his indefiniteness and his fear of the baselessness of his belief. "Whatever meaning ancient allegorists / Have settled on" indicates more than a little qualification in Forgael's approach to his mystic adventure, and his humility at this point is far from the absurd aloofness of the 1900 version.[34] As far from the 1900 version, in fact, as Yeats himself was, for the increased subtlety of Forgael's character, his action, his speech, is the index of the simplification and enrichment of Yeats' poetry consequent upon his theatre experience.

3

When Yeats reached the end of his period of closest association with the Abbey, he could sum up his achievements and failures and discover a balance that favored him and his art.

[34] From the acting version of 1906. This version goes considerably farther in the directions taken by the second version (1905). Yeats rewrote all the speeches of the sailors in the rhythmic prose of his comedies and cut extensively in the final scene as well as rewriting some poetic dialogue in the early sections of the play. In 1911 he revised the 1905 version again, though not to the degree that he had rewritten in 1905 or 1906.

The Abbey had been established as a non-commercial theatre, perhaps the greatest in the English-speaking world. In the work of Synge, Lady Gregory and Yeats himself, it had presented some of the best original dramas of its day. The hope for a national revival of heroic poetic drama had not been realized, for the Abbey by 1911 was mainly devoted to the production of peasant drama, folk comedy, and the realistic play of urban life. Still in its repertoire and its acting the Theatre asserted and served the highest of standards, and Yeats' own contribution to dramatic literature was impressive in its bulk and perfection.

Looking at his *Plays for an Irish Theatre* (1911), Yeats could allow himself some pride: for while it excluded three of the plays written during his theatre days [35] he could point to five poetic plays and two plays in prose, all finely realized. Of the poetic plays two—*Deirdre* and *On Baile's Strand*—are of the highest quality. *On Baile's Strand* is among the best poetic plays of this century, and resolves almost perfectly what Yeats saw as the dramatist's general problem:

> If we do not know how to construct, if we cannot arrange much complicated life into a single action our work will not hold the attention or linger in the memory, but if we are not in love with words it will lack the delicate movement of living speech that is the chief garment of life. . . .[36]

On Baile's Strand arranges much complicated life in a single action, telling in the delicate movement of living speech a story with which Yeats was obsessed: the story of Cuchulain's conquering of his son, culminating in the hero's own death as he rushes against the waves of the sea in insane combat.

The play contains yet more complicated action, for its major conflict is not that between Cuchulain and his son but between Cuchulain and Conchubar, who represent the two opposing views of life and modes of conduct, the hero's and the administrator's:

> *Cuchulain.* . . . I'll not be bound.
> I'll dance or hunt, or quarrel or make love,

[35] Yeats excluded *The Pot of Broth, Where There is Nothing,* and the new version of the latter, *The Unicorn from the Stars.*

[36] *Plays and Controversies,* p. 46.

Wherever and whenever I've a mind to.
If time had not put water in your blood,
You never would have thought it.
Conchubar. I would leave
A strong and settled country to my children.

Conchubar and Cuchulain are reconciled before Cuchulain's fight with his son. Yet Conchubar is the cause of Cuchulain's death, for if he had not persuaded Cuchulain to fight the unknown warrior who was wasting the shores of Ulster, Cuchulain would never have done so, would in fact have been a friend of the young man's. Finally, in his grief on discovering that he has killed his only son, Cuchulain confuses the waves with his antagonist Conchubar and dies raging and striking against them.

To hold this material at a proper distance, Yeats frames it in the complementary conflict between a blind man and a fool, who foreshadow Cuchulain's death, reveal the identity of his youthful victim to Cuchulain, and play the same roles as the great king and the great warrior, only in less dignified terms. The difference in level between them and the nobility is symbolized by the difference in language:

Blind Man. What would have happened to you but for me, and you without your wits? If I did not take care of you, what would you do for food and warmth?
Fool. You take care of me? You stay safe, and send me into every kind of danger.

When Conchubar tries to argue Cuchulain into joining forces with him, he speaks not in rhythmic prose but in blank verse:

Will you be bound into obedience
And so make this land safe? . . .
You are but half a king and I but half;
I need your might of hand and burning heart,
And you my wisdom. . . .

The hopeless nature of the struggle between the two forces is underscored when the women give a choral comment on the action:

Life drifts between a fool and a blind man
To the end, and nobody can know his end.

At the close of the action, Cuchulain and his son are both dead, Conchubar thereby being relieved of the peril cast upon the state by both of them, and the blind man is exhorting the fool to go with him and rob the houses, which have been vacated by their owners in their desire to see mighty Cuchulain's death. The concluding lines of the play are the ironic comment of the comic world on tragic action: heroes die in magnificent insane rage, while peasants conspire to perform an act without the boldness of theft or the intelligence of swindle. Within the frame of this comic world, we discern the eternal passion of Cuchulain, the warrior and lover, roused to intensity by his conflict with Conchubar, the administrator and official, turned against his son, and finally in the extremity of pain, driven to madness. This outcome is tragic in Yeats' sense of the word, for in his death Cuchulain attains mythic status through the very excess of his grief and rage.

Merely to examine the general structure is to see how well Yeats has objectified his own interest in the conflict between the fixed and the flowing, and the structure is matched by a persuasive texture, whether women are chanting as a chorus, kings are conducting their affairs in stately blank verse, or fool and blind man are whining at each other in the rhythmic prose Yeats learned from Lady Gregory.[37] His characters are cleanly delineated in their motives and attachments, complex yet representative of clear forces and types, and their language is consonant with their character. Conchubar speaks a plain dignified language, relatively free of metaphor, directly communicative:

[37] Lady Gregory's effect on Yeats' life is of course crucial. The following plays were written in collaboration with her: *Cathleen ni Houlihan, The Pot of Broth, Where There is Nothing,* and its redaction, *The Unicorn from the Stars.* Of their collaboration on *Cathleen ni Houlihan,* Yeats writes that he first saw the action in a dream as distinct as a vision: "I thought if I could write this out as a little play I could make others see my dream as I had seen it, but I could not get down out of that high window of dramatic verse, and in spite of all you [Lady Gregory] had done for me I had not the country speech. One has to live among the people, like you, of whom an old man said in my hearing, 'She has been a serving-maid among us,' before one can think the thoughts of the people and speak with their tongue. We turned my dream into the little play, *Cathleen ni Houlihan,* and when we gave it to the little theatre in Dublin and found that the working-people liked it, you helped me to put my other dramatic fables into speech." *Plays for an Irish Theatre,* p. 224.

You play with arguments as lawyers do,
And put no heart in them. I know your thoughts,
For we have slept under the one cloak and drunk
From the one wine cup. I know you to the bone.
I have heard you cry, aye in your very sleep,
'I have no son,' and with such bitterness
That I have gone upon my knees and prayed
That it might be amended. . . .

Whereas Cuchulain is more extravagant in language as in person:

I never have known love but as a kiss
In the mid-battle, and a difficult truce
Of oil and water, candles and dark night,
Hillside and hollow, the hot-footed sun,
And the cold, sliding, slippery-footed moon—
A brief forgiveness between opposites
That have been hatreds for three times the age
Of this long-'stablished ground. . . .

Yet both are clear, both speak in language and imagery close to the common experience of men.

The play displays in its grace and complication how greatly Yeats learned from his years of exploring stagecraft. In *On Baile's Strand* and the other poetical plays, Yeats learned to set his moments of high passionate expression in a wider context which qualified them and set them off as fine jewels in a modest setting. The moment of lyric intensity was present chiefly at climax and stubbornly held one foot on the ground, for as Yeats said a little ruefully at one point, ". . . dramatic writing is so full of the stuff of daily life that a little falsehood . . . contradicts our experience." [38] The climactic moment of his plays was often more passionate than any moment in his early lyric poems. However, this passion was now presented within realistic circumstances, and the circumstances were used both to make the action and speech more credible and to give the hero an obstacle to strain against, which would force him to call up all his passionate resources. He still aimed to treat ". . . the strongest passions, passions that had nothing to do with observation," [39] but by 1906 he had so far grown away

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 41.
[39] *Autobiography*, p. 109.

from the pure poetry of his early years that he could quarrel with Pater's insistence on the value of that pure art, music, and even in a cantankerous moment judge the orator superior to the musician:

> I in my present mood am all for the man who with an average audience before him, uses all means of persuasion . . . and but so much music as he can discover on the wings of words.[40]

The movement of his art from the early poetry of vague outline and willful sadness to this poetry of passionate statement and action was a movement from sorrow to joy, from elegiac picture-making to drama:

> When the tide of life sinks low there are pictures, as in *The Ode on a Grecian Urn* and in Virgil at the plucking of the Golden Bough. The pictures make us sorrowful. We share the poet's separation from what he describes. It is life in the mirror, and our desire for it is as the desire of lost souls for God; but when Lucifer stands among his friends, when Villon sings his dead ladies to so gallant a rhythm, when Timon makes his epitaph, we feel no sorrow, for life herself has made one of her eternal gestures, has called up into our hearts her energy that is eternal delight. In Ireland, where the tide of life is rising, we turn, not to picture making, but to the imagination of personality—to drama, gesture.[41]

As Yeats now saw it, his early poetry had been a poetry of sorrowful atmospheric painting:

> I had set out on life with the thought of putting my very self into poetry, and had understood this as a representation of my visions . . . but as I imagined the visions outside myself my imagination became full of decorative landscape.[42]

His experience with the theatre had confirmed him in his initial surmise that poetry could concern itself with the direct expression of personality, for as he said of the poet and dramatist:

> If his art does not seem to be the creation of a new personality, in a few years it will not seem to be alive at all. If he is a dramatist his characters must have a like newness.[43]

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[40] *Plays and Controversies*, p. 61.
[41] *Ibid.*, p. 115.
[42] *Essays*, p. 336.
[43] *Plays and Controversies*, p. 101.

Poetic art, then, whether dramatic or lyric, is the expression of personality, not morality:

> . . . my *Countess Cathleen*, for instance, was once the moral question, may a soul sacrifice itself for a good end? but gradually philosophy is eliminated until at last the only philosophy audible, if there is even that, is the mere expression of one character or another.[44]

Confirmed by the theatre in his original idea that poetry was the expression of personality, he had also learned the danger of attempting to represent personality without any relation to the world of daily being, he had found that pure tragedy was impossible, only tragicomedy, admitting the reality of both *anima hominis* and *anima mundi*, could move men to rapture by starting off in the area of the known world: men must be led to ecstasy slowly.

So in his later lyrics he followed a simple pattern of experience, from the seen to the envisioned, moving from the school room with its work-a-day problems to the subtlest metaphysical speculations to the symbol of the rooted chestnut tree. Essential to the later poems is the dramatic sense of climax, the dramatic technique of contrast between the perceived colloquial and the intuited rhetorical, and the dramatic resolution of the overriding symbol and the passion necessarily and universally attendant upon it. The structure of the Abbey dramas is in "Among School Children" and "Sailing to Byzantium" and so is the texture, the verse tuned to the needs of the living voice, the idiom basically true to the habits of educated Irish speech. Without the Abbey years, Yeats might have gone on to write magnificent lyric verse in his old age, but with the Abbey years he in fact did go on to write lyric verse dramatic in the special way that the Abbey plays are dramatic. So that one more debt of the English-speaking world to the Abbey is the dramatic magificence of Yeats' later verse.

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[44] *Autobiography*, pp. 399-400.

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